MARCH 31, 2003

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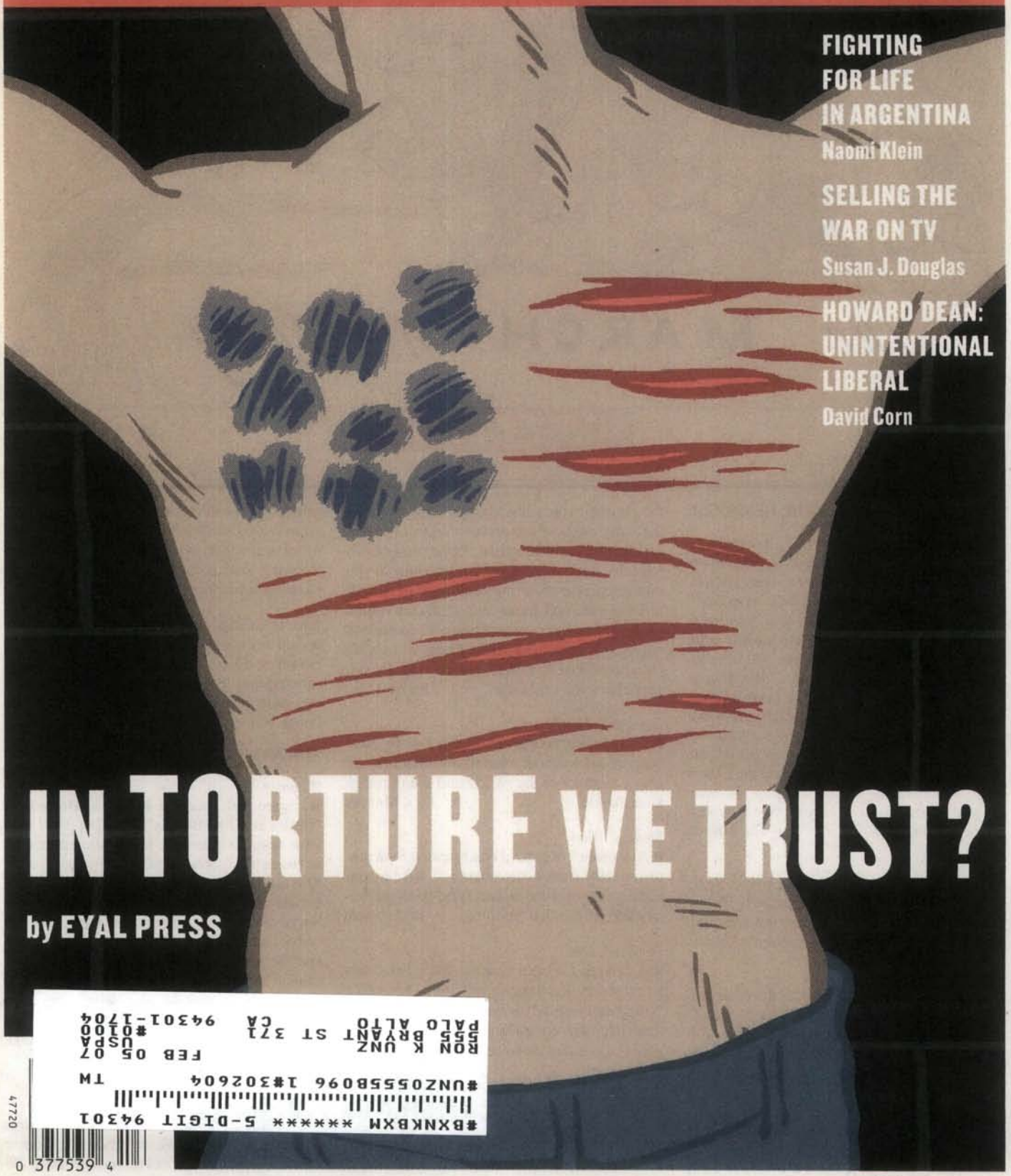

FIGHTING FOR LIFE IN ARGENTINA
Naomi Klein

SELLING THE WAR ON TV
Susan J. Douglas

HOWARD DEAN: UNINTENTIONAL LIBERAL
David Corn

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The MARCH of Folly

STEVE BRODNER

LETTERS

AD NAUSEAM II: FOX IN THE HENHOUSE

"Blech!" "sick," "disturbing," "nauseating" and "ugh" are a few of the epithets aimed at the Fox News ad on the back cover of our February 17 issue. Readers were "appalled," "confused," "shocked," "hurt," "horrified" and "wanted to weep." They likened it to "finding a nudie ad in Ms.*" or "finding that the woman you were totally in love with voted for Bush." Subscriptions were canceled. The ad was more despised than the "dime bag" ads, which caused us to reiterate our advertising policy in these pages ["Letters," Feb. 10]. But we follow the advice of Bill Michie of Manhattan, who urges us not to fill the Letters page "with some stupid Fox News flap," because nothing would make Fox happier. So we publish only a small sample. —The Editors*

Ojai, Calif.

■ What in the love of God are those Nazis doing on the back of *my* magazine?! If they took it over, I and my subscription are outta here. PREMANANDA CHILDS

Washington, DC

■ I can take the pro-Zionist ads, the dime bag ad, even the ubiquitous "Jesus Never Existed" ads, but Faux News?! Before you accept a full-page ad for Rush Limbaugh's show, three words of advice: Just say no! DULCE BENAVIDES

San Luis Obispo, Calif.

■ I'm wondering if *The Nation*'s recent decision to reiterate its advertising policy ["Letters," Feb. 10] wasn't a setup to prepare readers for the gag-reflex-inducing propaganda ad featuring the sorry mugs of our archenemies in the War on Lies and Disinformation. Rather than cancel my subscription, however, I'm returning to you under separate cover the back page of the offending issue and demanding a 1.6-cent refund ($35.97 one-year subscription/47 issues/48 pages). I'll have to sacrifice Frank W. Lewis's Crossword Puzzle #2880, but so be it. I await your check for 1.6 cents. JIM MALLON

Hayward, Calif.

■ Congrats on taking the 8K ad. I'm 74, have been a *Nation* reader most of my adult life, am also a member of the ACLU and didn't resign after Skokie. JACK MARTIN

Shelton, Wash.

■ Any chance of getting Fox to spring for a regular weekly back-cover color ad? It'd be converting narrow-minded, backward-thinking dollars into progressive reporting. ED ISENSON

Portland, Ore.

■ Although I'd been waiting for a Personals ad by Henry Kissinger proclaiming himself a "compassionate advocate of international human rights who enjoys long walks on the beach," your Fox (the "unbiased news source") ad serves just as well. WILLIAM GILLIS

Houston

■ I laughed out loud when I saw the Fox ad—they're simply out to rankle *Nation* readers. Refusing to print the ad because you find it nauseating constitutes censorship. Anyone who cancels a subscription over it has no chance of winning a debate with those folks, much less throwing their political patrons out of office. Keep my sub rolling. HARRY LOUIS RODDY

Topanga, Calif.

■ Add my name to the list of the outraged. However, do not stop—do not ever stop—my subscription to your great magazine. Do not ever stop crusading for the good and decent things in our society. JOHN WIEBUSCH

'UNEARNED'? I DON'T *THINK* SO!

Wagener, SC

■ I agree with much of Robert L. Borosage's "Bush's Big Bad Budget" [Feb. 24], but I take issue with his reference to investment income as "unearned," morally inferior to wage income. This nomenclature is not, unfortunately, unique to him. I am retired, and my wife and I live on Social Security, a pension and investment income. I worked for and saved wages to accumulate the investments that supplement our pensions. The income from them is not "unearned." The appropriate taxation of investment income is a matter for debate, but it should not be clouded by derogatory terminology. ROGER SEARLE

FORCED PREGNANCY FOR THE POOR

New York City

■ As Jennifer Baumgardner eloquently points out in "*Roe* in Rough Waters" [Feb. 10], women

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EDITORIALS

The UN's Relevance

Much to the frustration of the Bush Administration, France, Russia, China and the other members of the United Nations Security Council opposing the British-US resolution on Iraq have not bought into Washington's argument that the failure to act would render the UN irrelevant. And rightly so, since the UN's relevance depends not on what Washington demands but on its viability as a forum that reconciles the national interests of its constituent members with the international legal framework provided by the UN Charter, which the United States has ratified and pledged to uphold. While at times the UN has been ignored or thwarted—the war in Kosovo comes to mind, as well as the routine use of the veto by the Soviet Union and the United States during the cold war—the fact is that it still matters a great deal to most of the world. As UN Secretary General Kofi Annan writes in the *Wall Street Journal*, if the United States goes to war without UN authorization, "the legitimacy of that action will be widely questioned, and it will not gain the political support needed to ensure its long-term success" in postwar reconstruction. Certainly embattled British Prime Minister Tony Blair believes the UN is relevant; otherwise, he would not have worked so desperately for a second Security Council resolution that could provide him with a justification for taking his nation to war alongside the United States.

At this writing, it is unclear whether Blair and the Bush Administration will succeed. But whether they do or not, and whatever happens in Iraq, the UN will continue to be needed—to help put Iraq back together if there is a war, and to deal with many other issues. As Shashi Tharoor, UN Under Secretary General for Communications and Public Information, writes in the London *Independent*: "When this crisis has passed, the world will still be facing...problems of weapons of mass destruction, of the degradation of our common environment, of contagious disease and chronic starvation, of human rights and human wrongs, of mass illiteracy and massive displacement. These are problems that no one country, however powerful, can solve on its own, and which are yet the shared responsibility of humankind." As just two examples, in Iran and North Korea, both of which may now be developing nuclear weapons capabilities, the military option is unrealistic—Iran because it is not susceptible to easy defeat and North Korea because it can rain death on Seoul and US troops along the 38th parallel. The only feasible alternative is a UN inspection regime.

The argument in the United States about whether the UN is relevant is a reflection of just how large the gap is between the United States and the rest of the world. Much of the world, including the other great powers, has entered a postnational understanding of global governance on questions of world order. France, Germany, Russia, China and other world powers are now committed to international rules forbidding the unilateral use of force and to a form of consensual global governance. This is a remarkable achievement—the vision of the founders of the UN.

The United States, however, is still fighting this notion, and only wants the UN and other international institutions to exist on its own terms. Thus, the question is not the relevance of the UN but the extent to which the United States is willing to accept a world that it has helped create.

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The Vision Primary

The presidential contest has begun, as usual, with the "money primary," in which major donors choose their favorites and weed out other candidates, long before any citizen has an opportunity to vote. The "media primary" accelerates the process of elimination by imposing its own random prejudices on the field. *The Nation* will promote a rival contest—the "vision primary"—in which candidates are evaluated in terms of how forward-looking their ideas are. (The first of a series of candidate interviews, which is part of that process, begins on page 17.) Here are some elements of a proposed "visionary" agenda, against which candidates' programs can be measured:

§ *Economic and Social Justice.* We need a universal healthcare system—one only government can construct—that will insure equitable access and control prices. America's ten-year experiment in letting insurance companies and HMOs manage the healthcare system has failed spectacularly. Both employees and businesses have suffered, because it did not contain fierce price inflation for drugs and medical care.

We also need universal access to decent housing and education, as well as a national "living wage"—a required minimum floor that provides a basic living standard for all workers. Instead of whipping poor people at the bottom, the government should act as "employer of last resort," a form of safety net that would serve as an economic stabilizer in bad times, then recede in good times. And we need to do a better job of providing for older citizens: The scandal of Social Security is not its financial crisis but the shameful fact that half of the country has nothing else to rely on for their retirement years. Beyond these basic human needs, we must fix our broken cities and our criminal justice system, afflicted by a failed drug war.

The much greater challenge is to reorder American capitalism itself, untangling the malformed power relationships that allow a relative handful of insiders and financiers to organize society for their benefit, abusing employees, communities and even shareholders while trampling on essential public values. For starters, a reform President would promote new civil rights legislation for workers, restoring their right to organize, and require independent representatives of consumers and workers on boards of trustees.

§ *An End to Empire.* The Bush Administration has made military dominance the defining feature of its international policy, justifying it in terms of the "war on terror." But dominance has not made us more secure, nor has it resulted in a more stable and democratic world. Progressive candidates must speak bluntly about the perils of American imperialism and offer as an alternative a commitment to a global order based on the rule of law. Democrats need to challenge Bush for his systematic assault on global initiatives, from the Kyoto Protocol to the treaty banning landmines to the International Criminal Court. The goal of the United States ought not to be to hold power over other people but to help build common institutions for keeping the peace, eliminating weapons of mass destruction and assisting all people to build viable societies. The coalition forged after September 11 that has tracked down Al Qaeda networks in scores of countries

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EDITORIALS

is an example of the efficacy of such global cooperation. The rush to war in Iraq demonstrates the perils of the Bush doctrine of unilateral pre-emption.

Even as it works to root out terrorism, it is essential that the federal government adhere to the principles for which the nation stands. In the domestic arena, we should not selectively impose on foreign nationals burdens that we are unwilling to tolerate for ourselves. In the international arena, we should not act as if we are immune in the long run from the rules of international law, which are essential to global peace and security. Secrecy, unfettered surveillance, unmonitored covert actions and kangaroo courts do little to advance the war on terror and much to erode the liberties for which that war is being fought. Democrats should be prepared to argue that we cannot defend American liberties by trampling on them.

§ *Protection of the Environment.* Bush's relentless retreat from environmental protection should form a central component of every Democrat's campaign. The ease with which a reactionary President can gut regulatory laws to please his industry patrons is its own scandal. But it is time to sound the charge, not simply bemoan the retreat. A Democratic candidate should lay out an ambitious program for energy independence—an investment- and jobs-led effort to develop renewable energy and increase energy efficiency. This should be the centerpiece of a broader effort to detail an agenda for green growth: for investments that both stimulate growth and jobs that move us closer to a sustainable economy.

§ *Values-Centered Globalization.* The moral dilemma of sweatshops—American consumers buy goods made in the global system's "dark satanic mills"—is a good starting point. Progressive candidates should hail the global movement for sensible rules to govern the world marketplace. In addition, they should be proposing concrete national legislation, directed at America's own multinationals, instead of waiting endlessly for global agreements. A modest first step would be an "international right to know" law that would require US companies operating overseas to provide foreign workers and communities with regular reports on toxic releases and environmental impact as well as their records on labor and human rights.

Beyond fairness, there is the need to reconstruct the global system itself. Since the end of the cold war, successive administrations have championed a form of globalization that has associated economic progress with deregulation and privatization. But it is now clear that this has only resulted in worse conditions for many of the world's people. The challenge is in how to translate the productivity gains made possible by the spread of technology and industrialization into rising living standards everywhere, so that all working men and women can consume more of their own increased production. That means international financial institutions must be reoriented away from making developing countries safe for American finance and multinationals, and toward what might be called global Keynesianism. We need institutions that will do at the global level what the New Deal and European social democracy did at the national level in the last century: build credit markets that serve the needs of working people, insure that workers benefit from rising wages and are protected from exploitative labor practices, and finance public investment projects that bring healthcare and education within the reach of all.

§ *Bust-Up of the Power Club.* The concentration of media ownership is a leading example, but the bloated size and encroaching control of mega-corporations is a general affliction, whether the villain is Wal-Mart or Citigroup, Big Pharma or corporatized agriculture. We need a progressive candidate who calls for reform of antitrust doctrine, which has been systematically stripped of meaning. The suspicion of bigness is a natural virtue of Americans; that skepticism toward the scale of mergers and takeovers should be restored in law.

§ *Strengthening of Democracy.* The two-party monopoly that controls access to elected office can be broken up—or at least ventilated—with electoral reforms like instant-runoff voting. The freewheeling public debates suppressed by money politics and by media concentration could be liberated with public financing for candidates. Free airtime, same-day voter registration and an end to the disfranchisement of felons should be part of strengthening our democracy.

This list is only preliminary, of course, intended to illustrate the possibilities and prod others into thinking big, too. We are not naïve: Neither the political system nor the public at large is ready for most of these propositions, but they won't ever be until some citizens—and some office-seekers—take on the role of agitators and educators. The 2004 primary contest will reveal which Democrats are most likely to rise to that challenge. Democrats, in any case, are very unlikely to recapture the electoral majority by thinking small.

COMMENT

Military Globalism

One of the first casualties of war may be those happy-talk forecasts of a robust recovery once the bombing starts in Iraq, but a far more momentous economic question accompanies Bush's invasion plans: Can free-market globalization survive in a world governed by one nation's overwhelming military power? The global economy has largely disappeared from political discussions in recent months as national leaders preoccupied themselves with warmaking. But the boosters of corporate-led globalization should understand that their vision of a New World Order is fundamentally imcompatible with George W. Bush's.

Who is to rule the world's future—global markets or national governments? The regime of globalization promotes an unfettered marketplace as the dynamic instrument organizing international relations. The other regime relies on the old-fashioned military power of the nation-state—the United States alone in this case—to impose its will on others in the name of global order. One system promises the free flow of capital, goods and technologies across national boundaries, largely exempted from control by sovereign nations. The other system sets out to intervene in the private marketplace—by force of arms if it chooses—to countermand any market transactions it regards as threatening. In history, of course, capitalism has often advanced arm-in-arm with mili-

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COMMENT

tary interventions. But that system was known as colonialism—the fusion of commercial ambitions and military conquest. It contradicts the principles claimed for free-running globalization, or at least unmasks its high-minded pretensions.

The outlines of this profound collision of purposes are now visible though not yet widely recognized, especially in Washington. Paul McCulley, a managing director of PIMCO, the world's largest bond investment fund, based in Newport Beach, California, observes the structural shift already under way in global governance, driven by the weakened condition of the global economy but also by the imperial ambitions of Washington. "American imperialism is, by definition, a retreat away from global capitalism, a retreat from the invisible hand of markets in favor of a more dominant role for the visible fist of governments," McCulley wrote.

This is a "regime change" the warrior crowd may not have anticipated, but the consequences are implicit in their insistence that the United States will capture and take control of Iraq's oil, the second-largest petroleum reserves in the world. American statesmen grumble about the mercenary interests of the French, Russians and Chinese, whose companies currently have contracts for Iraqi oil production, but what of America's mercenary interests? The *Wall Street Journal* reports that the Pentagon has already tapped Halliburton (the Vice President's old company) to manage after-action cleanup of the Iraqi oilfields. Industry analysts figure Halliburton and other US firms could share $1.5 billion in contracts. Meanwhile, the US Agency for International Development is seeking ambitious proposals from America's five largest construction companies (including Halliburton) to rebuild Iraq's roads and bridges, the electrical grid, housing, schools and hospitals after America's smart bombs finish their work (no foreigners need apply for the contract). American taxpayers will presumably pick up the tab, unless Washington instructs the US colonial general to seize Iraq's oil income as our own.

CALVIN TRILLIN

A Cheer for the New Nation of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro

Whose name stands out like banners made of Day-Glo?
The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro!
What sounds as if it's jerry-built by Lego?
The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro!
For what should we say *grazie* (and *prego*)?
The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro!
Rah, rah, The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro!

The threat to globalization is not the wasted American dollars but Washington's readiness to mix US commercial interests with its self-appointed role as global protector. At a time when the US economy must borrow from abroad to sustain its own domestic consumption, this move is sure to deepen distrust among trading partners and foreign creditors—suspicions that will permeate every forum of the trading system. Americans who imagine that their government will manage Iraqi oil to insure cheap gasoline may be disillusioned too. As overseer of Iraq, the United States would doubtless act like other OPEC members, managing production to insure stable oil prices at around $26 a barrel. Anything less threatens oil-producing countries—and oil companies. The Bush White House, if it has any sense, will quickly pass off this role to some sort of international agency. Otherwise, it is going to be caught between the interests of US consumers and its buddies in the oil industry.

The far more substantial conflict with globalization involves nuclear proliferation and Bush's commitment to fight the spread of so-called weapons of mass destruction on any front, with armed force if countries don't cooperate. It is good to see conservatives finally embrace the cause of nonproliferation, but they are about a generation late and used to be on the other side—defending multinational corporations against laws prohibiting export of defense-sensitive materials and machinery. Where did Saddam Hussein acquire his dangerous toxins? He bought them from European and American companies. Where did India and Pakistan get starter kits to develop nuclear weapons? Same place. For that matter, how did Israel get its nukes? In other words, to truly halt the spread of dangerous technologies, Washington will need much more than conquering armies. It will have to create an effective and intrusive set of export controls—worldwide—that can monitor a vast range of industrial goods and prohibit many items from entering into the "free trade" system.

A central quality of the globalizing economy is how fluidly it disperses advanced technologies from rich countries to poor countries—literally sharing the industrial tools of the wealthiest economies with many underdeveloped societies. In the broad sweep of human development, that aspect of globalization is virtuous (though it does dilute the advantages of the leading economies). Yet technology transfer cannot easily proceed if subjected to stringent regulatory controls by governments searching for forbidden weapons components. The controversies over Iraqi weapons illustrate why such rules are fiendishly difficult to devise and enforce. Was Saddam buying aluminum tubes and industrial magnets for a nuclear-bomb project or for standard uses in domestic centrifuges? The United States charged bomb-making motives; the UN inspectors endorsed Saddam's claim of innocence. Multiply these ambiguities and conflicting interpretations across thousands of industrial chemicals, hardware or software. Bush's desire to control the terms of trade—only nice countries can buy the dangerous stuff—sounds like Sisyphus on the Potomac.

While Washington focused obsessively on war with Iraq, it seemed to forget for the moment that the global economy remains wounded and groaning. When the war is over, these troubling facts will return with brutal clarity. The worry is not only the

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weakened US economy, which props up global trade by playing the supportive role as "buyer of last resort" for other nations' exports. The global system itself has still not recovered from the great financial crisis of 1997–98; bank lending to emerging economies remains $177 billion below five years ago. Nor has the United States shaken off the deep wounds from its own bursting stock-market bubble. The economic arrows are pointing down again at present—even as the United States absorbs record trade deficits. If this White House understood what is at stake, Bush would be launching major public-works spending here in the homeland instead of bombing, then rebuilding, Iraq. If globalization's ardent advocates grasped the deeper economic implications of Bush's war, they too would be demanding to bring the troops home.

WILLIAM GREIDER

Selling the War on TV

Let's say you have a war to sell. You have the usual public relations tools at your disposal: highly scripted press conferences, stories leaked by White House officials to a compliant press. But what if you don't really trust the press? More to the point, what if fewer and fewer people (especially young people) are actually watching the news, and are instead gripped by the latest television phenomenon, an oxymoron called "reality TV"? Move over, Australian outback and bachelors in French chateaus. How about a reality TV show set in a war zone?

On February 27, as the soaring trumpets and military tattoo snare drums evoked the soundtracks of *The Longest Day* or *The Dirty Dozen*, viewers were introduced to ABC's *Profiles From the Frontline*, a six-part series about US Special Forces in Afghanistan. ABC News was let nowhere near this project. Instead, Jerry Bruckheimer, the movie producer whose totally excellent synergy with the Defense Department can be seen in *Black Hawk Down*, *Pearl Harbor* and *Top Gun*, served as co-producer. The Pentagon provided Bruckheimer's film crews with transportation, access to aircraft carriers and other military sites, as well as technical advice. As co-producer of the show Bertram van Munster put it, the military was "very enthusiastic about the whole thing. Obviously we're going to have a pro-military, pro-American stance." That's an understatement.

The music alone makes you want to run to the recruitment office. In the opening sequence, as we watch a rapid-fire montage of missiles launching, pilots soaring at a 45-degree angle in the wild blue and helicopters backlit by exploding flames, pounding drums accompany one of those Enya-style arias (kind of like a female muezzin) that have come to signify something on the order of "God Is Here." The most mundane operations are made weighty by a soundtrack of drums and bassoons, or percussion that simulates a beating heart. When one man calls "the wife" back home, the music shifts to the soulful acoustic guitar all too common on "smooth jazz" stations. Then, so we aren't choked up for too long, we get out on the deck of the USS John F. Kennedy, where the timpani-driven, violin-rich scoring typical of *Star Wars* enlivens your pulse and declares how endlessly romantic, exciting and noble war is.

If the music isn't enough to convince you that war is more fun than a mosh pit, there are the point-of-view shots from the cockpit of fighter planes, point-of-view shots from the hood of a jeep barreling through Taliban country, even point-of-view shots from the undercarriage of a helicopter as it lands. You are there—everywhere, omniscient, safe, in command, like a general, like a god.

Profiles takes everything from the reality TV and MTV playbook to glamorize war. Eyeblink-quick edits, cuts from color footage to freeze-frame black-and-white stills and plenty of handheld work, interspersed with one-on-one interviews with a selected

(Continued on Page 30)

NATION NOTES

That Fox News Channel advertisement on the back cover is not a parody. We know it's hard to believe, but it's a real ad, and they paid good money to run it, too. And yes, it's the second such ad that we've run (see the letters page for reactions to the first). If the ad causes you distress, we suggest that you chew a Tums, go to your television set, turn it on and change the channel to your local Fox News station. Then—turn it off! Hard! Feel better? No? Well, look at the ad again and really read it. "Real journalism," it says. "Fair and balanced." Are you laughing yet? Catch the quote: "America guarantees a free press... Freedom relies on a fair press..." Whom are they quoting? Voltaire? Jefferson? No, Roger Ailes, chairman of Fox News. That's the Roger Ailes who is former chief strategist for Presidents Nixon, Reagan and Bush I. Mr. Ailes, you see, comes from a good Republican background, not a good journalistic background. His boss, owner of Fox News, among many other properties, is Rupert Murdoch. Interesting fact: Every one of the papers owned by Murdoch's News Associates is solidly in favor of war on Iraq. Compared with Murdoch, Mao Zedong, who said, "Let a hundred flowers bloom," was a free-speech fanatic.

For the big picture on the rightward tilt of the big media, we refer you to *Nation* columnist Eric Alterman's well-reviewed book *What Liberal Media?* As for Fox News, we have seen nothing to make us want to change Daphne Eviatar's description in these pages ("Murdoch's Fox News: They Distort, They Decide," March 13, 2002): "a calculated mouthpiece for the right that remains thinly veiled behind its misleading mantra, 'fair and balanced.'"

* * *

Let's welcome to the world (with hopes for a better one) Georgia Frances Reed-Stamm. Born 11:57 AM, March 2, weighing in at 6 lbs., 13 oz. Congratulations to senior editor Betsy Reed and husband John Stamm. And say hello to Esther Kaplan, Betsy's replacement while Betsy is on maternity leave.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

'No Place in the Democratic Party'

At last the leaders of the Democratic Party have moved decisively, hauling out their ripest comminations and hurling them at—no, not at George Bush. The man at whom they're leveling their fire is Representative James Moran of Virginia. Moran's in hot water over his head for having remarked in a March 3 town hall session with his constituents that, as quoted in the Virginia-area *Connection* newspapers, "if it were not for the strong support of the Jewish community for this war with Iraq, we would not be doing this."

The House and Senate Democratic leaders, Nancy Pelosi and Tom Daschle, have denounced Moran's remarks, and six Jewish House Democrats have taken it upon themselves to advise Moran that he not seek re-election in 2004. Should he do so, "we cannot and will not support his candidacy." The game plan is clearly what it was with Hilliard of Alabama and McKinney of Georgia, both evicted from Congress last year as conspicuous acts of retribution against critics of Israel: Breathe a word about justice for Palestinians, and you'll lose your seat. Moran says he'll certainly run again, and the decision will belong to the voters of his district.

One reason Moran is getting whacked so hysterically is that Jewish nerves are raw on precisely the point he raised, the role of Jewish opinion here in pressing for the attack on Iraq. It's one thing for Pat Buchanan to raise the issue of dual loyalty in *The American Conservative* (as he has just done), but when Tim Russert starts pressing Richard Perle to assure us that he's advocating an attack on Iraq in the interests of the United States, not some other power, we know it's perched squarely on the front burner.

Suddenly researchers from *Nightline* (one called me on the matter) and other mainstream outfits are rushing for copies of "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," the 1996 briefing plan for Benjamin Netanyahu prepared by such pro-Israel hawks as Perle, Douglas Feith and others now high in the Bush Administration, advocating attack on Iraq.

It's now OK for reporters (Robert Kaiser in the *Washington Post*, for example) to describe the Jewish neocon lobby for war, starting with Perle, Wolfowitz and Feith, and heading on down the list to Elliott Abrams, now running the Israel-Palestine portfolio at the National Security Council. The op-ed pages are beginning to vibrate with predictable charges from people like Lawrence Kaplan of *The New Republic* that all this talk of dual loyalty and Israel's agenda is nothing but rank anti-Semitism.

Moran is plummeting in the familiar downward spiral of contrition and self-abasement. But does his remark about "strong support" for attack on Iraq in the Jewish community have any basis in reality? What about American Jewish organizations?

Last fall the *Forward* reported that some Jewish groups, such as the Workmen's Circle, were angry at the way the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations had been hijacked by the prowar faction and by its president, Mort Zuckerman, who was openly howling for war in his own publication, *U.S. News & World Report*, as "the only appropriate and acceptable course." In mid-September Michelle Goldberg began a piece on this topic in *Salon* with "Once a pillar of the American peace movement, mainstream Jewish groups and leaders are now among the strongest supporters of an American invasion of Baghdad."

On October 11 the *Forward* reported that a draft resolution of the fifty-two-member Conference supported "measures necessary to ensure Iraqi disarmament." Jack Rosen, president of the American Jewish Congress, was quoted by the *Forward* as saying "the final statement ought to be crystal clear in backing the President having to take unilateral action if necessary against Iraq to eliminate weapons of mass destruction." Abe Foxman of the ADL called the resolution "a consensus document," and the *Forward* cited him as saying he would support a position that backs the President in "whatever he decides he needs to do."

Of course there are Jewish groups, not least in the big peace coalitions, that are strongly and effectively antiwar. In January the American Jewish Committee released a poll claiming that a majority of American Jews—59 percent—approve of US military action against Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Thirty-six percent opposed such action. These findings, the AJC also emphasized, were comparable to the attitudes of the general American population.

It's at the elite level that the Jewish voices one hears are overwhelmingly pressing for war. When Congress voted last October on war powers, the *Forward* noted that though a majority of House Democrats voted against, a majority of Jewish House Democrats favored the option of attacking Iraq. In recent weeks, fearing backlash, some Jewish groups have been carefully downplaying their support for Bush.

Back once more to Moran. What is the nature of his supposedly "anti-Israel" record that the rabbis in his district are now seeking to avenge? In a speech to the American Muslim Council, Moran, who has traveled extensively in the Middle East, said Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was coming to Washington "probably seeking a warrant from President Bush to kill at will with weapons we have paid for." True enough.

In a 1996 *Jerusalem Post* op-ed, Moran described an Israeli border policeman beating an unarmed Palestinian. "The unarmed youth was held on the ground while police officers armed with guns and clubs climbed over each other's backs to land their own blows on his body," Moran wrote. "Most of the witnesses to this scene said it happens all the time. When Israeli police and Palestinians are concerned there is no justice or fair play. Might makes right. I witnessed the police laughing and making self-congratulatory gestures after the beating."

How encouraging to know that an elected US representative has the sinew to describe such a scene. How chastening to realize that such indignation, in Nancy Pelosi's words about Moran's recent remarks in Virginia, has "no place in the Democratic Party"—or, given the broader Christian evangelical alliance with Sharon, in the Republican Party either. ■

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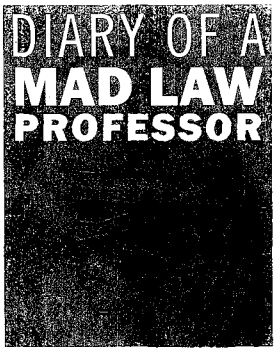
PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

Snow Falling on Ashes



It was a cold, gray morning, chance of flurries. As I braced for the weather that's buffeted the East Coast recently, I thought: What a spiraling blizzard of bad policy we face.

Within an hour, a much larger storm than predicted rolled in. Whiteout conditions, two inches of accumulation an hour. School let out early; I bent into the wind to hunt for provisions, my burrowing instinct sharpened by the looming war. The snowstorm felt like practice for the disruption of not-just-another-Desert-Storm. Competing media images of flakes falling and sky falling were mixed up in my mind. I filled the tank of my sensibly efficient automobile and shopped for peace through comfort food: chicken and milk, broccoli and brownie mix. I spent the rest of the day indoors, watching the world disappear beneath a deep blanket of white. It was the Perfect Storm.

How lucky I am, I thought, to be able to indulge my fear of war with this snug fantasy, a jaded city-dweller's dream of post-industrial frontier life, but not too far from Kmart. I am always poised to camp out for up to three days, and there's a childish relief in that. I still have stores of candles left over from Y2K, plus batteries in all sizes, extra nuts and raisins, and a shortwave radio. I have, however, managed to control that recurring sense of panic in the bottled-water aisle of the grocery store—back on the eve of 2000, I was so terribly suggestible that I stocked up on bottles of water so large that when one burst, the floorboards of an entire room were warped in the ensuing flood.

The snow fell fast and silently, as though plugging the holes in the dike against war. Safe and dangerous, gentle but forceful, impenetrable but unreal. I immersed myself in the live reports of the United Nations inspectors and the ensuing discussions among members of the Security Council. I listened to National Public Radio because their coverage was calm and coherent, but simultaneously I watched the hearing as broadcast on network television. Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei made their presentations, proclaiming that they needed "not weeks, not years, but months" to complete inspections. The television then cut away to a series of advertisements, while on NPR the foreign ministers of Germany, Bahrain and Mexico cited their deep discomfort at initiating a war. I listened while watching television's visual wall of dancing sanitary pads, detergent and laxatives.

Next, Secretary of State Colin Powell spoke. TV went back to the UN to cover his speech, full of strength and demands and ultimatums, a verbal spanking. Invasion as duty. After Powell's speech, the TV cut to a series of White House correspondents for interpretation and analysis of what one called the "awesome power of the United States." Meanwhile, on NPR, the Russian foreign minister was asking: "Is it reasonable to halt these inspections and the momentum they have achieved? Which is better: the difficult but clearly fruitful results of the inspectors' work or resorting to force...with its serious and unpredictable consequences?" France's foreign minister decried what he called the "automatic use of force," suggesting instead that the pace of inspections be stepped up; that inspectors report every three weeks, if necessary; that a schedule be established, of 120 days or shorter, but not the mere seven days Washington was pushing. China agreed with France, and Chile cited the "central position" of the UN and multilateralism as a "permanent interest." There was a soap opera on TV while Spain's foreign minister spoke, echoing Powell in his denunciation of inspections as a "strategy of impotence."

The TV cut back to the UN long enough for Britain's Jack Straw, then off again to more ads for Kmart and Metamucil. On NPR the foreign ministers of Angola, Cameroon, Pakistan and Guinea urged that their conviction that a peaceful resolution was still possible "not be interpreted as an unwillingness to act." The UN Charter, they urged, binds nations to exhaust all nonmilitary means of compliance. I listened desperately, watched hopelessly—it was as though two different destinies were unfolding in parallel worlds.

In the ensuing days most domestic news hewed to a narrative very much driven by the television version: the United States and Britain seemingly opposed only by the querulous truffle-and-piffle-extruding French. By week's end the whole thing was being packaged as a "standoff" between rock-solid American values and the unyielding, dogmatic, yet effeminately puffing French. The "rest of the world" was repeatedly described as "undecided" or seemingly not even worthy of such an energetically emasculatory drubbing.

When I think about it, I've been primed for disaster my whole life. In elementary school in the 1950s, we were taught that there was recourse if radioactive fallout dusted our persons in the wake of an atomic sunset. "Take a shower immediately," my second-grade teacher advised. "Take cover under your desk." Later, during the Bay of Pigs, we would practice saving ourselves by spending the recess hour marching two-by-two from one side to the other of the school basement, singing "Oops, there goes another rubber-tree plant!" and "Go, you chicken fat, go!" In the event of a real nuclear war, I suppose, it would have been a bit like the orchestra playing "Nearer, My God, to Thee" as the Titanic sank. But in the absence of such, it was a foundational bonding experience of purest optimism.

I think of this, the uncynically full-throated childhood-me, as I watch the birds of spring return, and yet the snow keeps falling. It lends a sense of control, I guess. I cannot die if I have bottled water. There's a handsome man at the helm of the ship in a uniform with shiny silver buttons and he's telling us what to do because God is on our side and ours is not to reason why, and I'm not afraid of that iceberg or the fire falling from the sky or that ring of burning resentment stretching from Iran to Yemen to Afghanistan to Serbia to Colombia to Iraq to Nepal to Turkey to Chechnya to Indonesia to Pakistan to Venezuela to the Philippines to North Korea to Canada to...

Hold my hand. Let's sing. ■

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NAOMI KLEIN

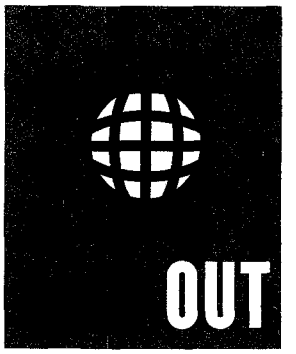
No Peace Without a Fight

On a muddy piece of squatted land in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Florencia Vespignani is planning her upcoming tour of the United States, where she will be speaking with students and activists about Argentina's resistance movements.

"I'm a bit scared," she confesses.

"Of the war?" I ask.

"No. Of the plane. We have wars here all the time."



Vespignani, a 33-year-old mother and community organizer, is a leader in the Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTD), one of dozens of organizations of unemployed workers, known as *piqueteros*, that have emerged out of the wreckage of Argentina's economy.

When Vespignani describes life as war, it is not a metaphor. In a country where more than half the people live in poverty and twenty-seven children die of hunger each day, she has learned that to stay alive, you have to go to the streets and fight—for every piece of bread, for every student's pencil, for every night's rest.

From the perspective of the International Monetary Fund, the *piqueteros* are the collateral damage of neoliberalism—a fluke explosion that happened when rapid-fire privatization was mixed with "shock" austerity. In the mid-1990s, hundreds of thousands of Argentines suddenly found themselves without paychecks, welfare checks or pensions. Rather than disappearing quietly into the scavenged shantytowns that surround Buenos Aires, they organized themselves into militant neighborhood-based unions. Highways and bridges were blocked until the government coughed up unemployment benefits; abandoned land was squatted on to build homes, farms and soup kitchens; a hundred closed factories were taken over by their employees and put back to work. Direct action became the alternative to theft and death.

But that's not why Vespignani describes life in Argentina as a war. The war is what happens next, after she and her neighbors dare to survive: the visits by armed thugs, the brutal evictions from squatted land and occupied factories, the assassinations of activists by police, the portrayal of *piqueteros* as menacing terrorists. Last month Buenos Aires police used tear gas and rubber bullets to clear sixty families out of an abandoned building near the trendy Plaza Dorrego. It was the most severe repression in the city since two young leaders of the MTD were killed by police during a road blockade last June.

The police said they were concerned about the safety of the squat, but many people here think the violent eviction was simply part of the latest economic adjustment being cooked up at the Sheraton Hotel, where IMF delegations have been meeting with bankers and candidates in the upcoming presidential election for weeks now. The IMF hopes to assess whether Argentina can be trusted with new loans: whether it will pay off foreign debts while continuing to cut social spending. But there is another criterion, left unspoken, that presidential aspirants must meet to merit foreign capital: They must show that they are willing to use force to control those sectors hurt by such agreements. Squatters, *piqueteros*—even the *cartoneros*, the armies of scavengers who comb through garbage looking for cardboard to sell—are under siege. According to the former owner of the city's largest privatized garbage company, now running for mayor on a platform of "Let's Take Back Buenos Aires," garbage is private property and the *cartoneros* are "thieves."

In short, the desperate quest of millions of Argentines to stay alive is a threat to the economy's recovery and must be stopped.

John Berger recently wrote, "Without money each daily human need becomes a pain." In Argentina, any attempt to alleviate that pain is becoming a crime. That is the war Florencia is talking about, and as she travels across the United States, she will have the difficult task of trying to make that case to activists who are almost exclusively focused on ending a different kind of war, one in which the strategy is "shock and awe," not daily brutality and mass marginalization.

Standing amid the torn-up cobblestones outside the squat on the night the sixty families were evicted, with tear gas still hanging in the air and dozens of people in jail, I found myself thinking about the calls for "peace" coming from Europe and North America. The antiwar message resonates forcefully here, and tens of thousands participated in the global day of action on February 15. But peace? What does peace mean in a country where the right that most needs defending is the right to fight?

My friends in South Africa tell me that the situation there is much the same: Families evicted from miserable shantytowns from Soweto to the Cape Flats, police and private security using bullets and tear gas to force people from their homes, and, last month, the suspicious murder of Emily Nengolo, a 61-year-old activist fighting water privatization. Instead of devoting their energy to securing food, jobs and land, social movements around the world are being forced to spend their time fighting the low-level war against their own criminalization.

The great irony is that these movements are actually waging the real war on terrorism—not with law and order but by providing alternatives to the fundamentalist tendencies that exist wherever there is true desperation. They are developing tactics that allow some of the most marginal people on earth to meet their own needs without using terror—by blockading roads, squatting in buildings, occupying land and resisting displacement.

February 15 was more than a demonstration—it was a promise to build a truly international antiwar movement. If that is going to happen, North Americans and Europeans will have to confront the war on all its fronts: to oppose an attack on Iraq and reject the branding of social movements as terrorist. The use of force to control Iraq's resources is only an extreme version of the force used to keep markets open and debt payments flowing in countries like Argentina and South Africa. And in places where daily life is like war, the people who are militantly confronting this brutality are the peace activists.

Because we all want peace. But let's remember, it won't come without a fight. ■

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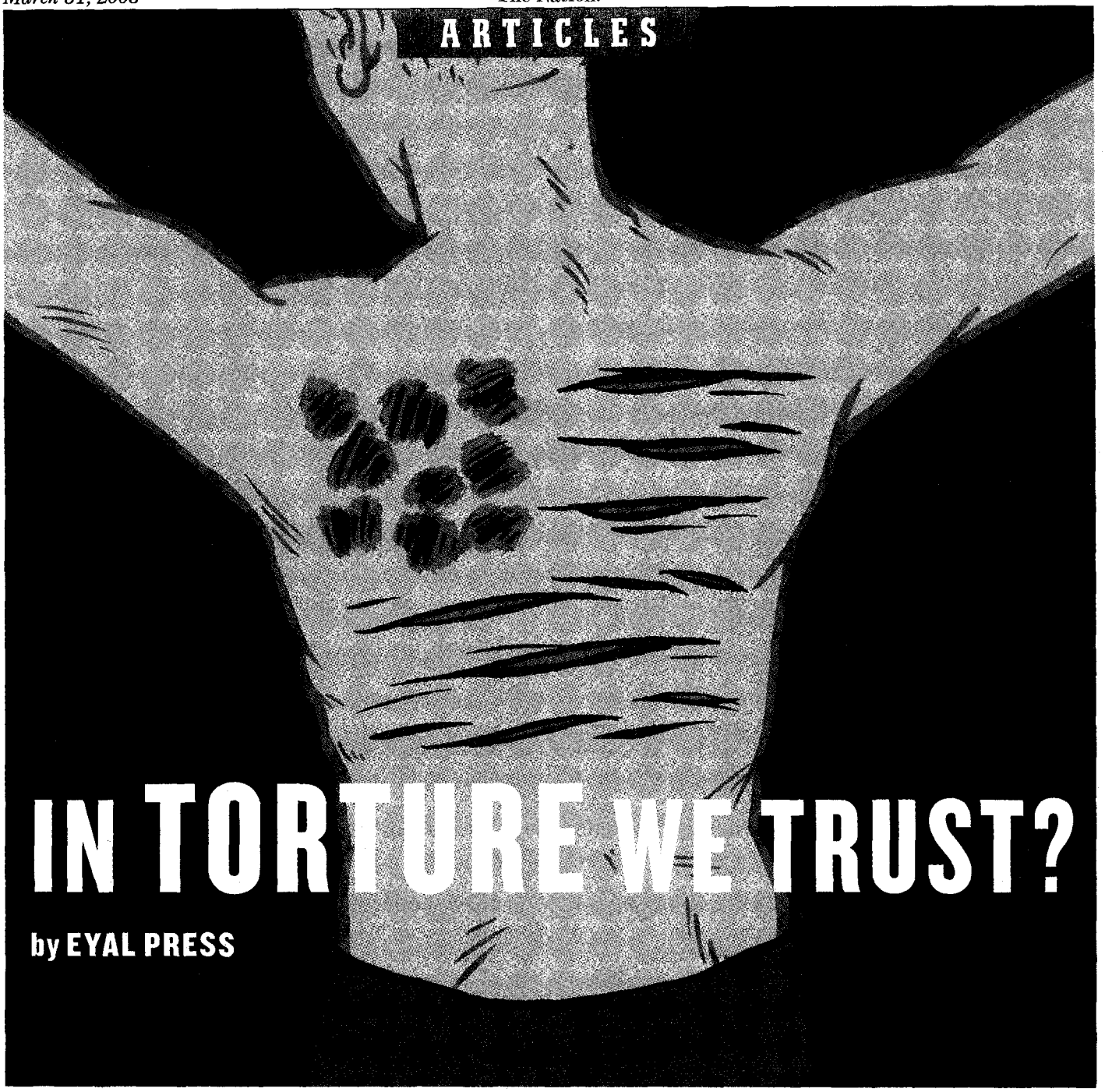
ARTICLES



IN TORTURE WE TRUST?

by EYAL PRESS

If patriotism has to precipitate us into dishonour, if there is no precipice of inhumanity over which nations and men will not throw themselves, then, why in fact do we go to so much trouble to become, or to remain, human? —*Jean-Paul Sartre*

The recent capture of Al Qaeda leader Khalid Shaikh Mohammed is the latest indication that the taboo on torture has been broken. In the days after Mohammed's arrest, an unnamed official told the *Wall Street Journal* that US interrogators may authorize "a little bit of smacky-face" while questioning captives in the war on terrorism. Others proposed that the United States ship Mohammed off to a country where laxer rules apply. "There's a reason why [Mohammed] isn't going to be near a place where he has Miranda rights or the equivalent," a senior federal law enforcer told the *Journal*. "You go to some other country that'll let us pistol-whip this guy."

Asked about this by CNN's Wolf Blitzer, Senator Jay Rockefeller IV, a Democrat from West Virginia and vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, replied, "I wouldn't take anything off the table where he is concerned, because this is the man who has killed hundreds and hundreds of Americans over the last ten years." (An aide to Rockefeller subsequently insisted that the Senator did not condone turning Mohammed over to a regime that tortures.) In fact, sending US captives to abusive allies, and other policies that potentially implicate America in torture, have been in use for months.

On December 26 of last year, the *Washington Post* published a front-page story detailing allegations of torture and inhumane treatment involving thousands of suspects apprehended since the September 11 terrorist attacks. Al Qaeda captives held at

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overseas CIA interrogation centers, which are completely off-limits to reporters, lawyers and outside agencies, are routinely "softened up"—that is, beaten—by US Army Special Forces before interrogation, as well as thrown against walls, hooded, deprived of sleep, bombarded with light and bound in painful positions with duct tape. "If you don't violate someone's human rights some of the time, you probably aren't doing your job," one official said to the *Post* of these methods, which at the very least constitute cruel and inhumane treatment and may rise to the level of "severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental," the benchmark of torture.

The same article reported that approximately 100 suspects have been transferred to US allies, including Saudi Arabia and Morocco, whose brutal torture methods have been amply documented in the State Department's own annual human rights reports. "We don't kick the [expletive] out of them," one official told the *Post*. "We send them to other countries so they can kick the [expletive] out of them." Many captives have been sent to Egypt, where, according to the State Department, suspects are routinely "stripped and blindfolded; suspended from a ceiling or doorframe with feet just touching the floor; beaten with fists, whips, metal rods, or other objects; subjected to electric shocks." In at least one case, a suspect was sent to Syria, where, the State Department says, torture methods include "pulling out fingernails; forcing objects into the rectum...using a chair that bends backwards to asphyxiate the victim or fracture the spine." A story in *Newsday* published just after Mohammed's arrest quoted a former CIA official who, describing a detainee transferred from Guantánamo Bay to Egypt, said, "They promptly tore his fingernails out and he started telling things."

Many captives have been sent to Egypt, where suspects are routinely 'stripped and blindfolded; subjected to electric shocks.'

Just as pundits debated Mohammed's possible transfer, evidence emerged that remaining in US custody might not be any safer : Death certificates released for two Al Qaeda suspects who died while in US custody at the Bagram base in Afghanistan showed that both were killed by "blunt force injuries." Other detainees told of being hung from the ceiling by chains.

The Bush Administration insists that the United States has not violated the UN Convention Against Torture, which the Senate ratified in 1994. But the cascade of recent revelations has left human rights groups understandably alarmed. Shortly after the *Washington Post* article appeared, a coalition of organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, fired off a letter to Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz calling upon the Bush Administration to unequivocally denounce torture and clarify that the United States will "neither seek nor rely upon intelligence obtained" through such practices. But few have echoed their call. "There's been a painful silence about this," says Human Rights Watch executive director Ken Roth. "I haven't heard anyone in Congress call for hearings or even speak out publicly." The silence extends to the media, where, until Mohammed's capture, no follow-up investigations and few editorials had appeared—not even in the *New York Times*.

The absence of debate may simply reflect a preoccupation with Iraq, but it may also signal that in these jittery times, many people see torture as justified. In the aftermath of the World Trade Center attack, numerous commentators did suggest that the absolute prohibition on torture should be reconsidered. Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz famously proposed allowing US judges to issue "torture warrants" to prevent potentially catastrophic terrorist attacks. Writing in *The New Republic* last fall, Richard Posner, a judge on the US Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, expressed reservations about Dershowitz's proposal but argued that "if the stakes are high enough, torture is permissible. No one who doubts that this is the case should be in a position of responsibility."

Lurking behind such comments is the specter of the so-called "ticking bomb": the captive who knows of an imminent attack that will cost thousands of lives, imagined vividly on February 4 in the hit Fox series *24*, in which US agents used electroshock to extract a confession about an impending nuclear attack.

Should an exceptional captive such as Mohammed be tortured to extract potentially lifesaving information? *The Nation* spoke with several prominent theorists of ethics, human rights and the law, all of whom acknowledged that this is very difficult emotional terrain, even if there is, in the end, only one truly ethical answer. Martha Nussbaum, a professor at the University of Chicago who has written several books on ethics and human rights, offered a frank—and somewhat jarring—admission. "I don't think any sensible moral position would deny that there might be some imaginable situations in which torture [of a particular individual] is justified," Nussbaum wrote in an e-mail to *The Nation*.

But as Nussbaum went on to note, in the real world, governments don't just torture ticking time bombs: They torture their enemies, under circumstances that routinely stray from the isolated, extreme scenario. Even the most scrupulous regime is bound to do so, for the simple reason that nobody can know for certain whether a suspect really is a ticking bomb. "There's an inevitable uncertainty," explains Georgetown law professor David Cole, the author of *Terrorism and the Constitution* and a forthcoming book on September 11 and civil liberties. "You can't know whether a person knows where the bomb is, or even if they're telling the truth. Because of this, you end up going down a slippery slope and sanctioning torture in general." So while Cole and Nussbaum can imagine scenarios where torture might constitute a lesser evil, both favor a "bright line," in Cole's words, banning the practice.

Henry Shue, a professor of politics and international relations at Oxford who has published an influential academic article on torture, points out that the French experience in Algeria is illustrative. Though justified as a rare measure to prevent imminent assaults on civilians, says Shue, torture quickly spread through the French security apparatus "like a cancer." "The problem is that torture is a shortcut, and everybody loves a shortcut," Shue says. "I think it's a fantasy to believe that the United States is

Eyal Press is a journalist based in New York City. *Research support was provided by the Investigative Fund of the Nation Institute.*

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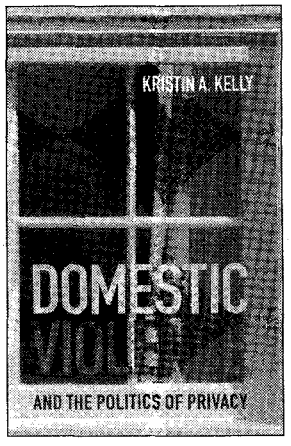

Domestic Violence and the Politics of Privacy

KRISTIN A. KELLY

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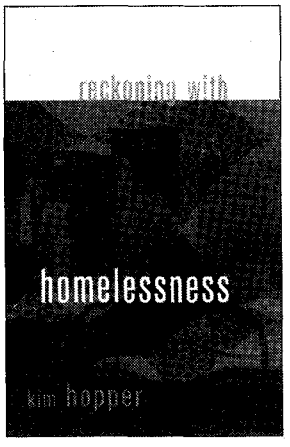

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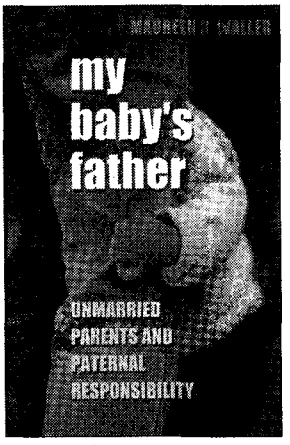

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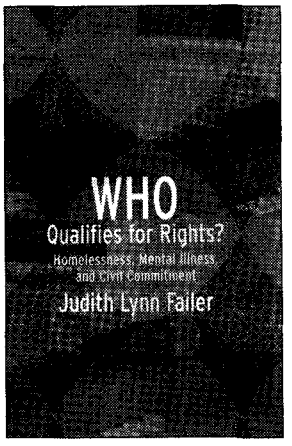

Who Qualifies for Rights?

Homelessness, Mental Illness, and Civil Commitment

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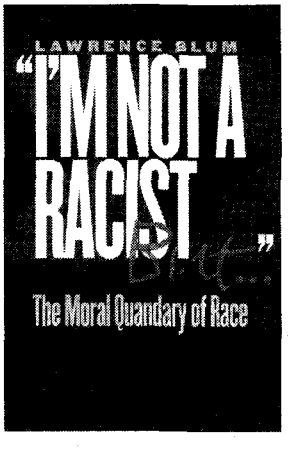

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The Algerian experience recurred in Israel, where, until the Israeli Supreme Court formally banned the practice in 1999, preventing "ticking bombs" from carrying out suicide attacks served as the justification for hooding, beating and abusing hundreds of Palestinians. "Very quickly, from a rare exception torture in Israel became standard practice, in part because the ticking bomb metaphor is infinitely expandable," says Human Rights Watch's Roth. "Why stop with the bomber? Why not torture the person who could introduce you to the cousin who knows someone who planted the bomb? Why not torture the wife and kids? Friends? All of this becomes justified."

And once torture becomes common practice, it severely undermines a society's democratic norms. As Shibley Telhami, a professor at the University of Maryland and an expert on the Middle East, writes in his new book, *The Stakes*, "We cannot defend what we stand for by subverting our own values in the process." In the current climate, conservatives may dismiss such talk as soft-minded idealism. In fact, nobody has more adamantly insisted that the war on terrorism is, at root, a conflict about values than George W. Bush. In his recent State of the Union address, the President catalogued the torture methods administered to prisoners in Iraq. "Electric shock, burning with hot irons, dripping acid on the skin, mutilation with electric drills," Bush said. "If this is not evil, then evil has no meaning."

'The ticking bomb metaphor is infinitely expandable. Why stop with the bomber? Why not torture the wife and kids? Friends?'

For the same government that denounces such practices to soften the rules when its own interests are at stake sends a disturbing message: that American moralizing is meaningless. That the United States is willing to dehumanize its enemies in much the way that it complains Islamic terrorists dehumanize theirs.

The parallel between terrorism and torture is instructive. Proponents of each practice maintain that the ends justify the means. They explain away violence by framing it as a necessary "last resort." And they obscure the human impact of that violence by refusing to register the humanity of their victims.

For torture is—and has always been—a function not of brute sadism but of the willingness to view one's enemies as something less than human. As Edward Peters, a professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, has shown in his authoritative history of the subject, in ancient Greece only slaves and foreigners were subjected to *basanos* (torture). During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as the Enlightenment swept across Europe, one nation after another abolished the practice, to the point where, by 1874, Victor Hugo could proclaim that "torture has ceased to exist." Yet torture was reinstated during the decades that followed—just as the European powers established colonial empires. It became acceptable to treat "natives" in ways that were unacceptable for "the civilized." In more recent decades, when torture has been employed—South Africa, Cambodia, Tibet—it has often been meted out to members of groups so demonized that their individual identities were erased. In this context, it is chilling that the names and identities of the captives in the war on terrorism are as unknown to us as the methods being used against them.

"For the torturers, the sheer and simple fact of human agony is made invisible, and the moral fact of inflicting that agony is made neutral," writes Elaine Scarry in her powerful book *The Body in Pain*. But those facts are neither invisible nor neutral to the victims. "Whoever has succumbed to torture can no longer feel at home in the world," the Holocaust survivor (and torture victim) Jean Améry observed in his searing memoir *At the Mind's Limits*. "It is fear that henceforth reigns.... Fear—and also what is called resentments. They remain, and have scarcely a chance to concentrate into a seething, purifying thirst for revenge." In a recent article in the London *Guardian*, Hafiz Abu Sa'eda, head of the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, described how the experience of being tortured by Egyptian authorities has played a role in radicalizing members of Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

"Torture demonstrates that the regime deserves destroying because it does not respect the dignity of the people," Sa'eda explains. "[The Muslim Brotherhood] began to argue that society should be destroyed and rebuilt again on the basis of an Islamic state." Among those who have been transformed from relative moderates into hard-line fanatics through such a process, the *Guardian* noted, is Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, a surgeon who, after being tortured in Egypt, fled to Afghanistan to join the mujahedeen and eventually became Osama bin Laden's deputy. It's possible that Zawahiri would have followed this path independently, of course. But no regime has ever quelled the hatred of its enemies by engaging in torture. The abuses instead fuel this hatred and indelibly transform not only the victims but the torturers themselves. "The screaming I heard on Saturday morning...those were screams which until today, when I sleep at night, I hear them inside my ears all the time," an Israeli soldier who stood guard over tortured prisoners said in an oral history published in 1990. "It doesn't leave me, I can't get rid of it."

To insist that the ban on torture should be absolute ought not to lead one to deny that this position comes with certain costs. It is probable that Israeli security forces have prevented some suicide bombings over the years by subjecting Palestinians to beatings and shakings, just as the French crushed the National Liberation Front during the Battle of Algiers partly by torturing (and killing) many of its members. In democratic societies, however, it is understood that, as the Israeli Supreme Court noted in its 1999 decision banning torture, "not all means are acceptable." Torture, in this sense, is hardly unique: Most rights—free speech, privacy, freedom of assembly—entail potential costs by limiting what governments can do to insure order. Holding the line on torture should thus be viewed in the context of a broad debate about where to draw the line between liberty and security, and whether, in the aftermath of September 11, America is willing to stand by its professed values.

Those who advocate crossing the line frequently invoke the famous warning from Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson that, however much we value our liberties, the Bill of Rights should

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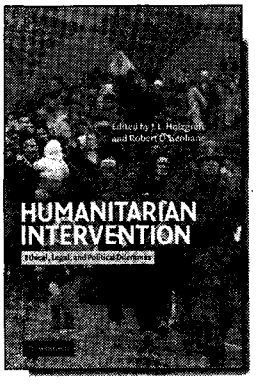

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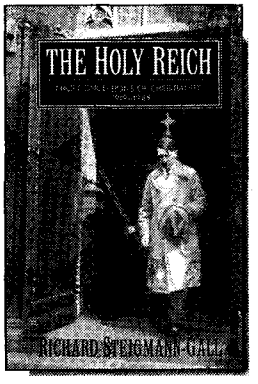

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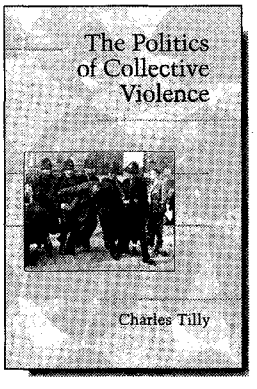

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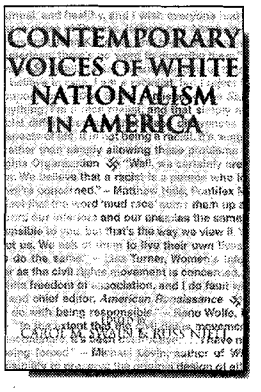

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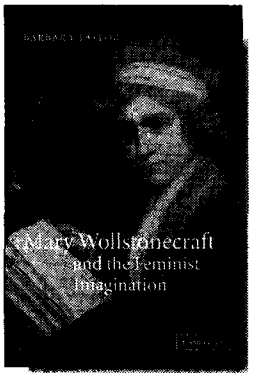

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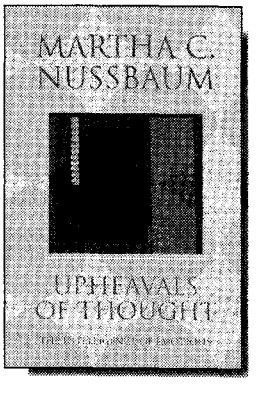

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not become "a suicide pact." But as real as the danger of Al Qaeda may be, few would argue that it constitutes an existential threat to the nation. As the world's wealthiest and most powerful country, the United States has enormous resources at its disposal and countless tools with which to wage its war on terror. In this respect, it's worth asking why brutal CIA interrogation methods could be considered necessary for our security—while adequately funding homeland security is not.

As a tool for collecting information, moreover, torture is notoriously ineffective (since people in pain have the unfortunate habit of lying to make it stop) and has done little to solve long-term security threats. Witness modern Israel—or for that matter France in Algeria.

A deeper problem is that, all too often, even the absolutist position goes unenforced. No government on earth admits to practicing torture, yet each year Amnesty International documents countless states that do. The disparity stems from the fact that torture nearly always takes place in private settings, and in societies loath to discuss the subject openly. In a forthcoming article, Sanford Levinson, a professor at the University of Texas Law School and a noted legal realist, argues that this gap between rhetoric and reality may bolster Dershowitz's proposal that torture should be brought out into the open and regulated.

'If the most powerful country in the world has to torture, how are we supposed to convince anyone else that they shouldn't?'

As William Schulz has argued persuasively in these pages [see "The Torturer's Apprentice," May 13, 2002], there are many reasons why, far from limiting torture, such a policy would end up making the practice more ubiquitous than ever. Any country in the world, Schulz points out, would henceforth be able to issue similar warrants and torture at will, free of criticism from the nation that pioneered the practice.

Levinson is right that it won't do simply to pretend that torture is not being perpetrated, as CNBC news anchor Brian Williams did the day after Mohammed's capture, saying to his guest, "Now, the United States says it does not engage in torture, and certainly for the purposes of this conversation and beyond we will take the government at its word." What's needed instead are scholars, reporters, politicians and citizens who are willing both to hold democracies such as the United States to their stated ideals, and to ask hard questions about what, in a democratic society, should constitute permissible methods of interrogation during wartime. If violence and the threat of violence are out, should prolonged interrogations be permitted? (The Supreme Court has ruled that any confession obtained after thirty-six hours of questioning is by definition coerced.) Should captives have access to lawyers? Should solitary confinement be allowed? This entire area of the law, says David Cole, remains nebulous, perhaps because it is an unpleasant topic to discuss.

Accompanying this discussion should be an equally frank dialogue about the safeguards we need to insure that rampant violations don't occur. For torture, like all governmental abuses, thrives in the absence of openness and accountability. In January the International Secretariat of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), a coalition of nongovernmental organizations from more than sixty-five different countries, issued a press release urging Washington to allow the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit the Bagram base in Afghanistan, where the practices the *Washington Post* described are taking place. The OMCT's recommendation was met with stony silence, not only in Washington but by the US media.

The chilled atmosphere is reminiscent of the cold war, when discussion of US support for regimes that engaged in torture (Pinochet's Chile, Suharto's Indonesia) was likewise swept beneath the rug of national security. A language of euphemism and evasion emerged that became so ingrained as to go unnoticed. On February 6, in a disturbing sign that the pattern is being repeated, the *New York Times* published a front-page story detailing the intelligence breakthrough that led US officials to connect the recent murder of a diplomat to an Al Qaeda cell in Baghdad. "Critical information about the network emerged from interrogations of captured cell members conducted under *unspecified circumstances of psychological pressure* [emphasis added]," the *Times* reported, a phrase you would expect to find in the training manual of a South American police state, not the world's leading newspaper. In the days following Mohammed's arrest, the US media uncritically accepted the Bush Administration's vow not to violate the UN Convention Against Torture, while casually mentioning (sometimes in the same article) that America could persuade Mohammed to talk by reminding him that it has access to his two young children. (Any threat to physically harm a captive's children would constitute torture.) London's *Economist*, by contrast, has questioned whether the United States is "quietly sanctioning the use of some forms of torture" and called on Bush to stop "handing prisoners over to less scrupulous allies."

In early March, the same week that news broke of the cause of the captives' deaths in Afghanistan, the *Post* reported that some nineteen detainees have attempted suicide at the US Navy Prison at Guantánamo Bay, which Michael Ratner, president of the Center for Constitutional Rights, says "begs the question of the long-term psychological effects of the techniques that are being employed there." For Americans to accept their government's assurances in light of these and other recent disclosures is deeply disquieting. For, as historian Peters has noted, the source of torture throughout history has always been the same: not the depraved prison guard who relishes inflicting pain but the society that agrees to tolerate, or even encourage, his actions. "It is still civil society," Peters writes, "that tortures or authorizes torture or is indifferent to those wielding it on civil society's behalf."

America's unique stature encumbers it with a special responsibility in this regard. "For better or worse, the United States sets precedents and examples," Henry Shue says. "We're very visible. If the most powerful country in the world has to torture, how are we supposed to convince anyone else that they shouldn't torture?" In Iran, a group of reformists in Parliament recently submitted a bill calling on their country to sign the UN Convention Against Torture. One can only hope that Teheran's hard-line clerics haven't been reading the *Washington Post*. ■

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SEEN AS THE ANTIWAR CANDIDATE, HE SHIES AWAY FROM BEING CALLED A LIBERAL.

Meet *The Nation*: Howard Dean

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—The Editors

RYAN INZANA

Howard Dean, it seems, is an unintentional liberal. The former governor of Vermont and current Democratic presidential contender is sitting at a table in a Washington hotel room—as Democratic governors, in town for a convention, pop in and out—trying to make the point that a fellow who was the enemy of progressives in his home state could still be something of a progressive champion as a national candidate. Last May, Dean, who was the Green Mountain State's chief executive for eleven years (winning election five times), became the first Democrat to declare he would seek his party's presidential nomination. Since then, this 54-year-old stockbroker turned doctor, hailing from a ritzy New York family, has for political handicappers become the sleeper candidate to watch. He established himself as the antiwar candidate before others with similar convictions joined the pack. He repeatedly blasts the Democratic Party for having lost its edge (if not its soul), and he has urged health insurance for all and a rollback—not just a freeze—in the Bush tax cuts. He cites as frontline qualifications his expansion of a state program guaranteeing health insurance for all Vermont children under 18 and his signing of legislation that established civil unions for gays and lesbians. Antiwar, favoring universal healthcare, trashing Bushonomics—is Dean shaping up as a hope for unreconstructed liberals? It's not that simple. And he admits it.

During an interview, Dean acknowledges that he battled fiercely with the Progressive Party of Vermont. In fact, he's even boasted, "The Progressives hate me because they're all big liberals and I'm not, and I've stopped them on many occasions." What has Dean stopped them from doing? "Raising taxes, mainly," he says. "We believe that balanced budgets are important.... 'Progressive' in Vermont means something different than it does nationally. We are a pretty liberal state. It's not entirely out of keeping that I'm one of the more progressive people in the [presidential] race while still being a moderate at home, because if you believe in a balanced budget, that automatically disqualifies you from being a progressive [in Vermont]. And I think at the national level, that's not true." (Progressives in Vermont have criticized Dean for not pushing for a universal state-run healthcare program, for not providing sufficient financial support to state colleges, for underfunding the Agency of Natural Resources and for too often compromising with developers. In 2000 the Progressives ran a candidate against Dean, and their nominee attracted 9.5 percent of the vote—almost enough to cost Dean the election.)

On the stump, Dean has received the most notice for left-of-center stances: his antiwar position and his call for healthcare coverage for all. But on Iraq, Dean has issued what appear to be contradictory remarks. In a February speech he denounced Bush for "focusing...on the wrong war at the wrong time," claimed that he (Dean) was "not ready to abandon a search for better answers" and called for continuing inspections "as long as there is progress toward disclosure and disarmament." But previously, Dean proclaimed that Washington should issue Iraq a sixty-day deadline to comply with the UN resolutions and if it does not, then "we will reserve our right as Americans to defend ourselves and we will go into Iraq." Then, at a Democratic National Committee meeting on February 21, he attacked the Democratic Party leadership for "supporting the President's unilateral attack on Iraq." Aren't these various lines inconsistent?

Dean doesn't concede. Instead, he spells out his position: "One, unilateral action is not appropriate unless there is an imminent threat to the United States. Two, the imminent threat would consist of Iraq's having a nuclear program or developing one or being found, credibly, giving weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical or biological weapons, to terrorists. Three, Saddam needs to be disarmed, period, whether he's an imminent threat or not. Four, the responsibility for disarming Iraq belongs right now to the UN because Saddam is an imminent threat to the region.... Unilateral action is not appropriate." That is an internally consistent position—but not a script to which he has always adhered. What would he do differently in the war on terrorism? He would "put more resources into trying to track down Osama bin Laden" (which sounds like a cheap shot, for is money the issue?), beef up the budget for homeland security and "get serious about the war for hearts and minds" by setting up "television and radio stations that appeal to the Arab populations and Islamic populations in terms of giving them straight news that is thoughtful and reasonable." (The Bush Administration has started these sorts of projects; Dean wants to accelerate them.)

On healthcare, Dean is no fan of sweeping reforms, such as the creation of a national insurance system. He tried to achieve universal coverage in his state and was beaten back, and he watched what happened to Hillarycare. So forget about it: "What I want to do is to get everyone in the system first and then we can argue about how to reform the system. And it's very simple." He would expand Medicaid to children and young adults

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under the age of 23, add a prescription drug benefit for the elderly within Medicare, and cover everyone in between by providing subsidies to businesses and individuals so workers could obtain health insurance "in the market." This would not be, he notes, "a big-government-run program."

How much of a subsidy? After all, Bush called for a subsidy, but it was too small to make enough of a difference to most of the uninsured. "We're working on that," Dean says. The money would come from undoing Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy. But, he explains, "this is not a Cadillac health insurance program. You can't give the same benefits you might give at IBM. If you did, why would IBM bother to give anyone health insurance?... It's a catastrophic health insurance program with first-dollar coverage for things like colonoscopies and mammograms that nobody would get if they had to pay for them. But after that, there's a big deductible." Would a national, government-run health insurance program make more sense? "Sure, it might work," he replies. "But we're not going to pass it. So why bother? I am totally pragmatically oriented.... It's like the Congress now—they're fighting about the patients' bill of rights. How ridiculous. Our party ought to be fighting for health insurance for every man, woman and child. Who cares what patients' bill of rights bill passes?" Wouldn't HMOs still dominate the healthcare landscape? "States," he answers, "have really cracked down on HMOs.... HMOs are not as hated as they once were."

'Of course I was antiwar' during Vietnam, Dean says, but adds that he distrusts ideologues. 'My MO has been to be in the middle.'

Dean takes pleasure in being an odd duck—ardently pro-choice; opposed to new, federal gun control; in favor of expanding the social safety net; and fiscally conservative. He slams the Bush tax cuts for making no economic sense and for having little stimulus effect. But what would this balanced-budget hawk do to rev up the sluggish economy and help the jobless? "What we should be pushing for," he says, "is a public works situation in which we invest in water and sewers and roads and rail and airport and schools.... Why would we [Democrats] come up with an alternative tax cut when we should be coming up with public works programs if we want to stimulate the economy?" But now he's sounding like an old-time Keynesian, prime-the-pump, big-spending Democrat. Would Dean put aside his balanced-budget obsession for a spending stimulus? "I feel very strongly about balanced budgets," he replies. "We do have to do something about the economy, and at the federal level you can't slavishly adhere to a balanced budget at all times.... First things first: Get rid of the tax cuts for people making more than $300,000. If jobs are still a problem, you have to look at the infrastructure. If the economy is turning around, then you can look at balancing the budget. But healthcare is the biggest priority after the budget."

On many issues, Dean lines up—or ends up—on the left, though occasionally with a twist. Asked about affirmative action, he angrily assails Bush for dishonestly and exploitatively using the word "quotas" in attacking affirmative action programs at the University of Michigan. Yet he also calls for basing affirmative action on "income and class" distinctions as well as race. He believes portions of the USA Patriot Act "overreach," but, he says, "I haven't condemned Congress for passing" the legislation. It's only natural, he explains, that the lawmakers would overreact. The problem is, he explains, that Bush has appointed right-wing judges who will not provide any counterbalance to the excesses of the politicians. Dean maintains he doesn't "believe the war on drugs is a criminal matter; it's a public health matter. To throw users in jail is silly." But he cannot stand state initiatives that seek to legalize medical marijuana. "I hate the idea of legislators and politicians practicing medicine," he says. Should the Feds be busting medical marijuana clubs? "Depends on the circumstances," he says. "In general, no." If he were President, Dean adds, he would force the Food and Drug Administration to evaluate medical marijuana, and he would be prepared to accept its findings. Regarding the Kyoto global warming treaty, he wouldn't sign it as is. He argues that the accord—since "it doesn't require the underdeveloped countries to do anything about greenhouse gases"—would "have the effect of moving the steel industry or other industries that pollute into countries where there are no requirements to improve their situation with greenhouse gasses." He wouldn't dump the treaty, as Bush did. Instead, he would continue to negotiate to make changes. He favors a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But, he says, "I don't think you can pressure the Israelis to do anything until you stop the terror." And he urges more federal spending on fighting global poverty and disease, but won't provide any sense of how much.

Dean, who comes from a family of Rockefeller Republicans, graduated from Yale in 1971, and by his own admission was "not particularly engaged" in the politics of the day. Why didn't the civil rights and antiwar movements inspire him? "The civil rights movement did," he says. "I did a lot of things on the ground on civil rights. I did some teaching. I did some tutoring. I was rooming with two African-Americans who were very active in the Black Student Alliance. It was really more a personal learning experience than a kind of political learning experience." That seems as if he is trying to score credit by association. And Vietnam? "Of course I was antiwar," Dean remarks. "But I really have a healthy mistrust of the left as well as the right. I distrust ideologues and I distrust people who find facts inconvenient. My MO has been to be in the middle. Facts matter to me a lot—probably because of my scientific training—and I didn't find it OK for people to be involved in blowing up the ROTC building at the University of Wisconsin and killing somebody who was inside, to protest the war.... I find the right wing equally as concerning. I simply don't trust the extremes on both ends." (Dean didn't serve in the military. Due to an unfused vertebra in his back, he was classified 1-Y, meaning he would only be called up in the event of a full-scale war or an emergency.)

His most-loved novel? Ken Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion*. His favorite album? "Probably a Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young album—I don't have a particular one in mind." And movie? "My most recent favorite movie is *A Beautiful*

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Mind," he says. "It was one of the very few movies in my life I have seen twice.... It was so complicated...a little bit like *The Magus*"—the John Fowles novel—"which was about a reality within a reality."

Dean has developed—and tries to promote—a reputation for being outspoken. At the end of his 1996 campaign for governor, he told a reporter that, sure, he provided more access to campaign contributors than to others. Would he do the same as a presidential candidate? "Well, probably," he says to me, quickly adding that he favors public financing of elections and recounting the time he turned down a request for a favor from a trucking company that had always been generous to his campaigns. ("It's true you have to listen to people who give you money in campaigns, but it's also true you don't have to do what they want.") He castigates the Bush Administration for playing racial politics and for sucking up to the religious right by removing references to condoms from the website of the Centers for Disease Control. He doesn't hide his dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party: "The problem is that we don't seem to know who we are." He decries Democrats who voted for Bush's education legislation. He clearly is hoping to be the straight-talk candidate of 2004: "Many people seem to be willing to say whatever it takes to get elected. And that's a mistake. You have to stand up for what you believe. Principle has to be more important. If it isn't, there's no excitement."

On bluntness, though, Dean doesn't always come across as McCainesque. An example of less-than-straight talk: Dean often brags about his A rating from the NRA. But when asked whether he considers the gun lobby a positive social force, rather than answering the query directly he outlines his own gun policy: Maintain the assault weapons ban, keep the Brady Bill's waiting period for gun purchases, close the gun-show loopholes and then permit states "to make as much or as little gun law as they need." And what of the NRA? "In Vermont," he says, "the NRA was very helpful" in his effort to conserve hundreds of thousands of acres of land. But what does Dean think of an NRA that has opposed the few gun-control measures he supports? Dean won't say a bad word about the organization.

Dean assails certain Democrats for taking a stand on the Iraq war in order "to position themselves for the upcoming presidential race." Like whom? "We're not going to get into names," he says, but it's clear he means Senator John Kerry. In talking about the institutional corruption in government, he says, "You see it in both parties. Our accounting standards were not what they should be, because of one of the people running for President." Is that a reference to Senator Joseph Lieberman? "I don't use names at this stage of the game," he says. "It's too early." Who was at fault for the Hillarycare disaster? "It got too complicated and got to be a big mess that nobody could understand," Dean says. But, he adds, "I don't blame Hillary for that." Why not? Could it be because, within Democratic circles, she is now an influential and widely admired senator? Ask him to suggest someone who would make a good attorney general, and he refuses. There are, he asserts, plenty of "moderate, thoughtful people" from which to choose. For Supreme Court Justices, he would look for "thoughtful, middle-of-the-road" jurists. "I can

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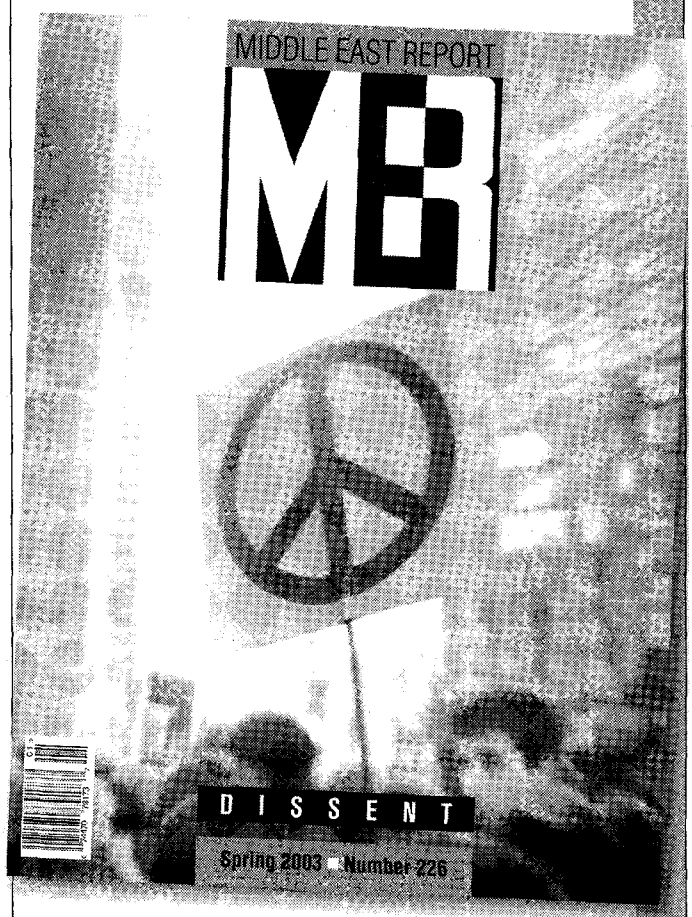

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tell you," he says, "it would not be a member of the [conservative] Federalist Society."

Dean's detractors in Vermont brand him as imperious, thin-skinned. Do they have a case? I ask him. "I want results and I am impatient with process," Dean replies. "The good thing about being a doctor is that you are results-oriented.... Facts are very important. I used to be against needle-exchange programs, because I thought they might spread addiction.... Then the Yale studies came out around 1993 and 1994, and I changed my position almost overnight.... Sometimes I get impatient with emotional arguments that are not based on anything. I like to cut to the chase."

Dean is not overly polished (which might be a plus), hardly an imposing or commanding figure (which is not). Brusque? He does have a doctor's that's-the-way-it-is manner. He's no charmer. But he is smart and sharp, and can exude a cool passion. And he's trying to cut a path for himself as an ideals-driven, angry but reasonable and rational, middle-loving, just-the-facts message-candidate who embraces pragmatism—one who takes on Bush Inc. for its warmongering and out-of-whack domestic priorities (though his candidacy, as of now, is far more defined by his war opposition than his other stands—which means he has a lot riding on whatever happens in Gulf War II). He's also a Democrat who bemoans his own party for its general wimpiness, rightward drift and inability to kick Bush squarely in the teeth. With these themes, he may well have an appeal for die-hard Democrats not put off by his lack of national standing or his more cerebral than charismatic political stylings. Yet he is a message candidate who recoils from ideological politics. "I don't really consider myself a progressive," Dean remarks, "though by national standards maybe I am.... I'm determined to change America. We are heading in the wrong direction." And if he has to sound (mostly) like a liberal to accomplish such change, so be it. ■

HOW AN ANTIWAR INITIATIVE IS TURNING INTO A WAY TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY.

Building Cities for Peace

JOHN NICHOLS

Amy Lake and 159 other residents of Salisbury, Connecticut, trudged through snow and freezing cold to gather at the Town Hall on the night of January 17. There, Lake read a resolution declaring that the townspeople of Salisbury oppose a pre-emptive military action against Iraq and calling on President Bush and Congress to work with the United Nations for peace.

RYAN INZANA

When the 44-year-old social studies teacher finished, someone made a motion to approve the resolution and just about everyone in the hall yelled "Second!" Then, by a vote of 156 to 4, this rural, Republican-leaning community became a "City for Peace." First Selectman Val Bernardoni wrote a note to President Bush urging him "to lead the world community toward universal understanding and good will," television stations broadcast the news, and folks from across the state started calling Lake to ask how their towns could do the same. "Our intent was to make some noise, to really get people talking, to educate people," says Lake. "The Cities for Peace movement has turned out to be the perfect vehicle. I think we all felt as if we had reclaimed our citizenship."

Lake's enthusiasm is matched by that of activists in communities across the United States. Over the past five months, jurisdictions that are home to more than 30 million Americans have passed 140 antiwar resolutions—forming what Telluride, Colorado, Council member John Steel described at a February 13 rally of Cities for Peace activists outside the White House as "the collective conscience of our country." Says John Cavanagh, the director of the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), which has played a critical role in promoting the Cities for Peace movement, "What we are witnessing is a remarkable grassroots movement that has had a role in transforming the debate about the war and that, I think, offers us a new model for educating and organizing that gives people at the grassroots a real voice in debates about national and international issues."

In Cavanagh's view, that model has enormous potential on a number of fronts. He foresees the possibility of networks of local officials who could "think globally, act locally," and who could work with organizers and activists across the country to put neglected issues on the national radar. Ultimately, says Democratic Representative Jan Schakowsky of Illinois, one of the most enthusiastic backers of the Cities for Peace push, these networks could become vehicles for pressuring Democrats in Congress—and perhaps even some Republicans—to weigh in on issues that they are now too politically cautious to address. "We could use that pressure," says Schakowsky, who gets no argument from local officials who have backed Cities for Peace resolutions. As Los Angeles City Council member Janice Hahn said when she announced she would vote for that city's antiwar resolution, "We're debating this issue because those we have elected to debate this issue [in Congress] have abdicated."

Anger at that abdication is at the root of the Cities for Peace movement, which began around the time of last fall's Congressional vote to cede authority on decisions regarding Iraq to Bush. "A lot of folks decided that if the people at the federal level were refusing to listen, they would start talking to City Hall," says Karen Dolan, a fellow at IPS, which has established a Cities for Peace clearinghouse. The first communities to take

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a stand—places like Santa Cruz and Sebastopol, in California, and Tompkins County, New York, did not pass peace resolutions as part of a planned protest. But as word spread that antiwar resolutions were being enacted, college towns that have long been centers of antiwar activism—Berkeley and Ann Arbor, Madison and Amherst, Oberlin and Ithaca—acted. Then came the big cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Newark, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Paul, San Francisco and Seattle. Washington, DC, voiced its objection to war early, while New York City said no to war on March 12. "It's like wildfire," says Dolan. "By the end of the holidays, we had about twenty-two cities. By the end of January, we had fifty-seven, and that's when there started to be some publicity. Then this movement just exploded. Now we've got more than 130 in thirty states, and there are more than 100 additional campaigns under way." At the National League of Cities conference in early March, the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials offered a resolution on the war, and representatives from cities that had passed resolutions integrated discussions of the impact of a potential war—and new homeland security panels—into the debate over how cities will meet fiscal challenges.

'When cities like Cleveland and Lorain pass antiwar resolutions, you know they think about that at the White House.'—Rep. Sherrod Brown

Modern technology, particularly the web and e-mail, has powered the Cities for Peace campaign as it has other aspects of the antiwar movement. After activists in Washington organized the effort to pass that city's resolution, Dolan helped develop a website with a "tool kit" for local activists. "When we started talking about doing a resolution in Los Angeles, I went to citiesforpeace.org and found the tool kit, and then I said, 'Look, this is how to do this,'" says Suzanne Thompson, an organizer of the campaign that won passage of the LA resolution by a 9-to-4 vote. The effort has also been aided by the Northampton, Massachusetts–based National Priorities Project, which has helped local officials detail the potential costs of war to their cities. Information about the economic trade-offs has frequently been included in resolutions—as an answer to those who ask why cities and countries are weighing in on national and international issues. "Workers in Millinocket face a more immediate threat to their livelihood than Saddam Hussein: They need their mill reopened," argues Maine State Senator Ethan Strimling, a prime mover of antiwar legislation in his state's legislature. "More than 300 people were recently laid off at L.L. Bean in Freeport. The city of Portland is thinking of giving pink slips to more than 100 of its workers. For all these reasons, we need the federal government to focus on our struggling families with the same energy and determination it has focused on Iraq. That was one of the major goals of [Maine's] resolution."

Maine's debate over antiwar legislation was front-page news there, as resolutions have been in many places where they have been considered. And the coverage extends well beyond local papers, drawing widespread national and international media attention. This, in turn, has inspired dozens of communities in Japan, Canada, England and other countries to pass antiwar resolutions; the mayors of London, Rome, Berlin, Vienna, Paris and Brussels recently issued a joint declaration, saying, "We, the Mayors of the major capital cities of Europe, wish to forcefully assert that a new conflict in Iraq can and must be avoided."

But the biggest impact of the campaign has been felt in US political circles. On the floor of the House, Jan Schakowsky proudly announced that her hometown, Chicago, has voted 46 to 1 against launching a pre-emptive attack. Says Schakowsky, "I think a number of members feel validated in their opposition to the war by the fact that the cities they represent have taken the same stand." Representative Sherrod Brown of Ohio, one of the savvier political players in Washington, says that even if President Bush doesn't bow to the demands of Gary and Kalamazoo for a shift in national priorities, you can bet that the White House has noticed. "[White House political czar] Karl Rove thinks about nothing but politics, and I think this has got to be driving him crazy," says Brown. "When cities like Cleveland and Lorain pass antiwar resolutions, you know they think about that at the White House. This isn't people demonstrating in Paris. This is local elected officials, who know what the mood is in their towns, and they are taking an antiwar stand."

Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, concurs. "The cities getting organized has given a real boost to the broad antiwar movement that I think caused the Administration to slow down at least for a time, and that's something we should all be paying attention to," says Edgar. "When local officials, who usually are the officials that most people know best, start to address national issues, and when they make the connections between national debates and what is happening at home, that sends a powerful signal."

In fact, it is nothing new for City Councils to pass resolutions that address issues that are seemingly outside their legislative purview. As far back as 1774, New York officials condemned the closing of Boston's port by the British, and in the 1850s the Chicago City Council challenged the federal Fugitive Slave Act. Before World War I, referendums in Midwestern towns expressed opposition to joining Europe's fight. Similar votes were held in communities across the country during the Vietnam War. In the 1980s, cities across the country declared themselves to be nuclear-free zones, and antiapartheid resolutions were common. But, says veteran political strategist Steve Cobble, "With the antiapartheid movement, and even with the nuclear freeze, it was a slower process. Now, with the Internet and e-mail, it's easier to get people on the same page quickly, to get things rolling and then to build on our victories. Peace is a pretty good issue, but there's no reason to stop there."

Already, the Bill of Rights Defense Committee has launched a Civil Liberties Safe Zone campaign, which so far has been endorsed by sixty-four towns, cities and counties across the country. In March, before Federal Communications commissioners Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein came to Seattle to hold a hearing on media consolidation, media reform activists convinced the City Council in Seattle—one of the first big cities to pass an antiwar resolution—to pass one urging the FCC "to protect con-

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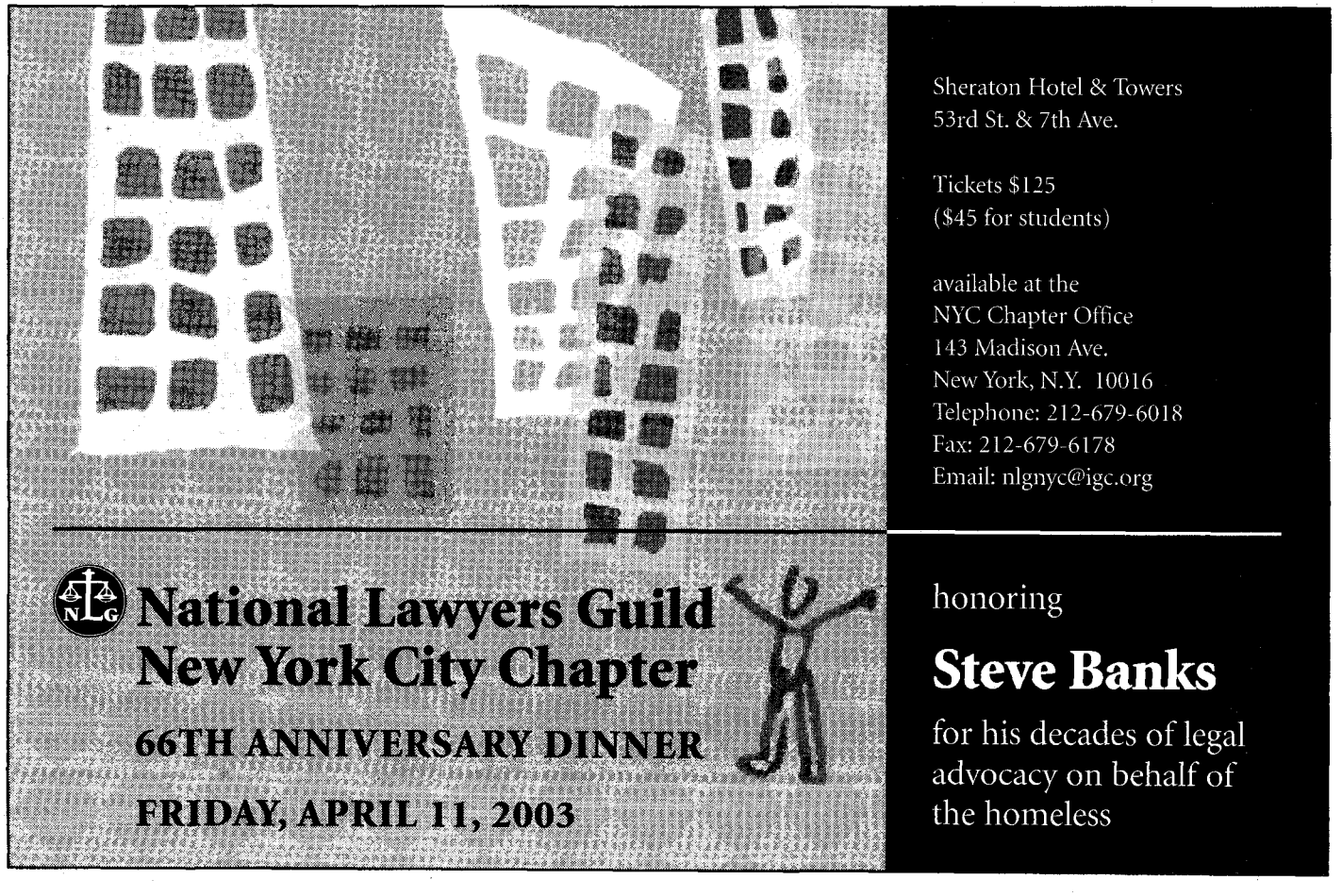
tent diversity and press freedom by retaining and strengthening existing media ownership regulations, including regulations that limit the number of stations one owner may hold." Within hours of its passage, media reform activists were talking about launching a campaign to have other cities do the same.

IPS's Cavanagh says local elected officials who have seen the power of the Cities for Peace initiative are already talking about working together on broader initiatives that could make cities—including those from Republican-leaning states—a force to challenge the Bush Administration on a variety of fronts. Adds Edgar: "Many of the people who run cities came up as activists, either on national issues like civil rights and the Vietnam War or on neighborhood issues. But they are activists, and they are smart. They know that resolutions like this would only have a limited effect if one or two cities passed them. But, as part of a national movement that is getting a good deal of attention, they know this makes them part of the debate."

It is that movement-building potential that excites Green Party activists like Ben Manski, co-chair of the party's national steering committee. At least twenty peace resolutions passed around the country were sponsored by Green elected officials, Manski says. "We've always believed that you cannot talk about problems in one city without looking at what is going on nationally and internationally." He adds, "What's happened with Cities for Peace shows how having Green elected officials, who communicate with one another regularly, makes it easier for movements like this to get started."

Democrats, too, are excited. "There is so much disappointment among grassroots Democrats with how the party leadership in Congress has responded to the question of war. I think some of these coalitions that we are seeing come together around the country will, ultimately, try to address that," says Edgar, who served six terms in the House as a Democratic representative from Pennsylvania. "It may not change Congress overnight, but I think it could, eventually, lead to a transformation of the Democratic Party in Congress." Schakowsky says she expects that Democratic members of Congress who did not challenge the Bush Administration on the war will be asked why local officials were willing to take a stand and they were not. "Cities for Peace votes at the local level drive home the fact that this is a political issue. That's going to make it hard for some members of Congress to explain why they were so silent," she says. "This could shake the party up, and it could be a factor in the presidential primaries."

Lisl Standen, an 87-year-old refugee from pre–World War II Germany who spearheaded the campaign to pass the antiwar resolution in rural Kent, Connecticut, hopes the shake-up will go well beyond party politics and cause Americans—including some powerful Americans in Washington—to re-engage with democracy. "One of the duties of living in a democracy is to join the great debates, to make ourselves heard by the powerful. So Kent's Town Meeting has made itself heard," she says. "President Bush would do well to listen to the little towns of America. We, in these small towns and the great cities of America—we uphold democracy better sometimes than does our Congress." ■



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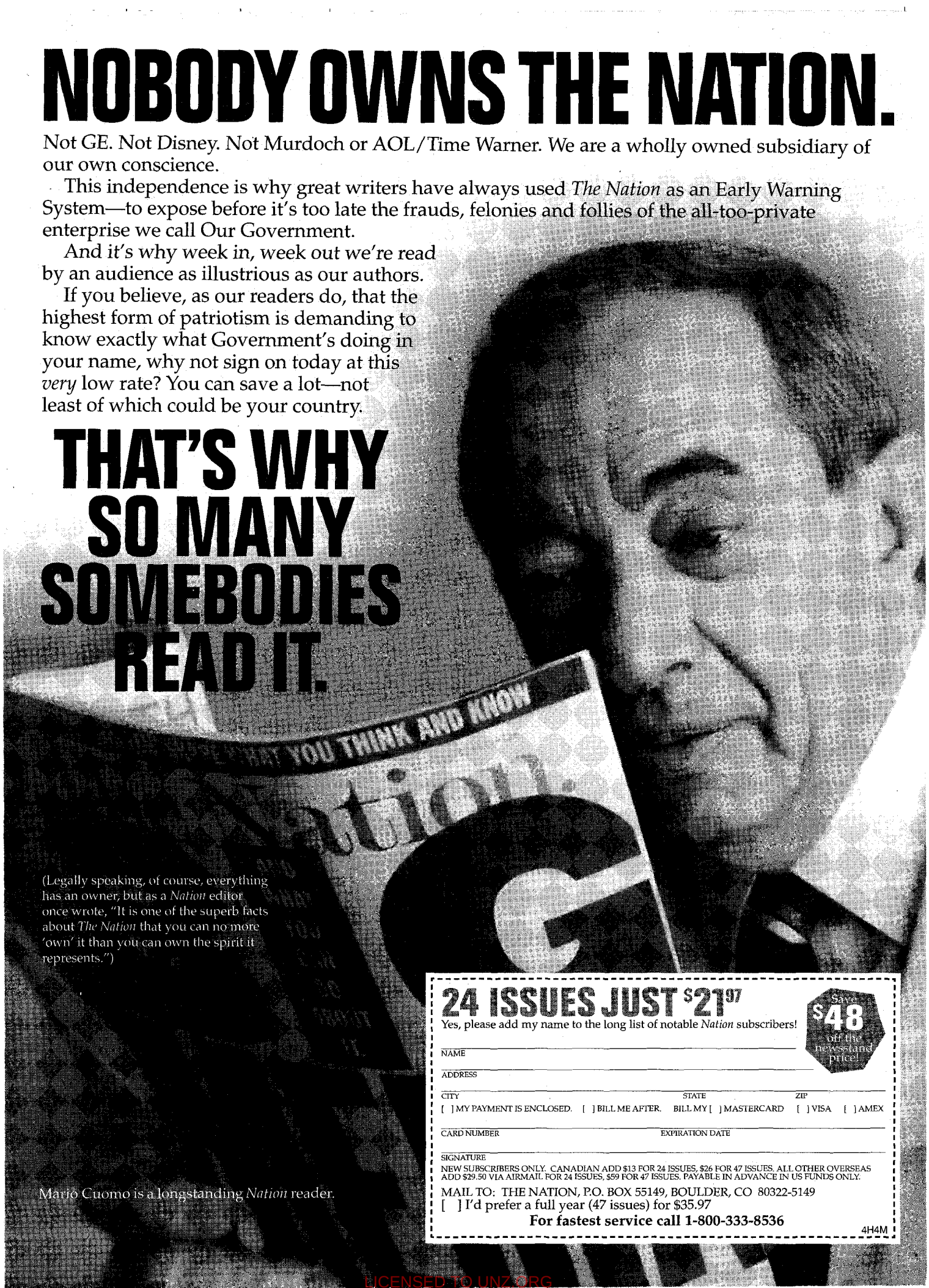

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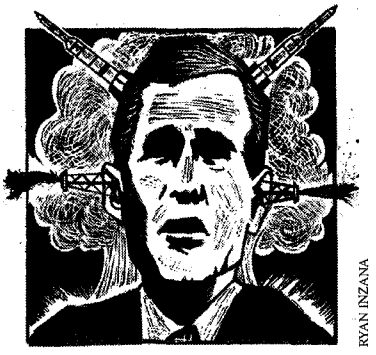
Fragments From a Diary

WALLACE SHAWN

January



RYAN INZANA

New Year's Eve—so quiet—unlike any New Year's Eve that I can remember. Even people who usually have three or four parties to go to were invited nowhere or purposely decided to stay in. We stayed in too. We were falling asleep when big bangs and odd screaming seemed to announce that midnight had come.

In the cold weather, in New York, in January of 2003, everyone is frozen.

We're passengers. We're waiting. We're sitting very quietly in our seats in the car, waiting patiently for the driver to arrive. We're nervous, of course, looking out the window at the gray landscape. Soon the driver will open the front driver's side door, sit down in his seat, and take us on a trip. We're going to Iraq. We don't want to go. We know we'll be driving straight into the flames, straight ahead into the flames of hell. It's crazy. It's insane. We know that. But we're paralyzed, numb, can't seem to move. Don't seem to know how to reason with the driver. Don't seem to know how to stop the car from going. Don't seem to know even how to get out of it.

Everyone's floating around in a daze. No one knows what they ought to be doing.

* * *

The awfulness of each country picking its special little men to be the "leaders." What a terrible way to live.

Here, we think about our leaders all the time. We dream about them. It wasn't so many centuries ago that kings and emperors were remote from their subjects. Their subjects didn't even know what their faces looked like. But I'm as familiar with the face of Richard Cheney or of Donald Rumsfeld as I am with the faces of my closest friends.

Our enormous country is really a tiny principality, in which our leaders loom gigantically large in the quiet green landscape. Here in our country, our sky is actually not a sky, it's a specially designed impenetrable dome, and inside it we're calmed by soothing music and soothing voices. Every morning we're given our *New York Times*, which teaches us to see our leaders "as people." Our newspaper helps us to get to know our leaders, their quirks, their personalities, helps us really to identify with them. I understand their problems, what they're trying to do, how difficult it is. And I share a life with them—at least I share the essential things: a climate sweetened by electricity, warm in winter, cool in summer; armchairs, bathrobes, well-made boots, pleasant restaurants. Just like our leaders, I like the old songs of Frank Sinatra, I like Julia Roberts, I like driving quietly through the fall foliage in New England, I like lemon meringue pie and banana splits. Our leaders share my life, and they've made my life. I *have* my life because of them. Can that be denied? Is my life of pasta and pastries and books and movies not based on the United States being the mighty nation they insist it should be?

* * *

Like Richard Cheney's life and Donald Rumsfeld's life, my life is set in motion by those poor crushed fossils under the sand of Saudi Arabia and the sand of Iraq. The price of the fossils must stay cheap. The boys are going to be fighting this war with my taxes, and they're going to bring me back the prize—my own life. Yes, I'm involved, to put it mildly.

* * *

Following the "news" each day before an enormous event occurs, as now before (maybe) war, reminds me of an old sensation: There was a children's game in which we were supposed to pin a paper tail on a paper donkey, and before you made your attempt you were blindfolded, and invisible hands spun you around and around till you were dizzy and disoriented and didn't know where you were. That's how I feel. President Bush is about to take a step toward seizing control of the entire planet. People and countries are terrified about the consequences for the human race if Bush does what he plans to do. And yet it seems as if we, the consumers of "news," when we try each day to learn about this desperately important moment we're living through, are given a huge, overpowering pile of stories, almost all of which deal not with the question of humanity's future, but instead with the question of Iraq's weapons.

Bush himself is not actually frightened by the weapons held (or not held) by this destroyed country, Iraq, nor is he actually shocked by the probability that Iraq, like all other nations on earth (because of the nature of nations), wants to be as well armed as it possibly can be. But he's managed to convince the governments of the world that, just as he will never say why he wants to invade Iraq but will only talk about Iraq's weapons, *they* must never say why they *oppose* the invasion, except by talking about Iraq's weapons. Bush will say Iraq has a lot of weapons, the opponents of war will say Iraq has few. This discussion will go on until the troops are ready and the weather's right for war, and at that moment Bush will declare he's "lost patience" with the laborious pace of the discussion of weapons, and he'll go to war.

The editors of the *New York Times* must know as well as anyone else that the discussion of weapons is the public relations branch of preparing for war, the propaganda arm of the process of preparation. The discussion of weapons, on Bush's part, pretends to be sincere, as all advertising does, but it is not sincere,

Wallace Shawn is the author of The Designated Mourner *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux) and* Aunt Dan and Lemon *(Grove).*

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and so it makes sense only as part of the story of preparation. But each morning I find in my newspaper two separate narratives, apparently describing unrelated developments: One (a thin little column) says that the preparations for war are going smoothly and the weather soon will be right for an attack, and the other (pages and pages) says that the discussions about Iraq's weapons are going poorly, and there's a danger that Bush may "lose patience." The thin column describes something that's actually happening. The pages and pages spin me around until I don't know where I am.

February

We've marched in Washington and then in New York. What happened around the world is astonishing! The despair we felt earlier is melting fast. In fact, our mood has utterly changed. But we have to ask, has theirs?

* * *

In school we were taught various terms to characterize political systems—"oligarchy," "autocracy," "democracy." What is our system? No term for it exists. To call it a democracy puts a false picture in the mind. How can you call it a democracy when, for example, the people don't even know *today* why in 1991 the first President Bush seemed to seek out the opportunity to attack Iraq, circumventing opportunities to avoid war? Yes, we're allowed to vote for our leaders, but we don't know what they're really like, because we're not allowed to know what they do. The enormous enterprises of the government are conducted sometimes for the benefit of some of the citizens, maybe even occasionally for the benefit of all of the citizens, but the citizens don't even know what the government is doing, much less why, much less who the beneficiaries are. The citizens can hardly be expected to comment intelligently on the government's decisions, because the citizens don't know what's actually going on, and they can't find out. We are lied to, manipulated and brainwashed, and then we're brought in at the appropriate moment to cheer and applaud, and we're never even told what we were being asked to applaud. If that's "democracy," then we're using the word in a very restricted fashion.

Sometimes a man like Jimmy Carter may blunder into the White House and sit down behind the desk in the Oval Office, and the rules of the system have to be explained to him. Jimmy Carter declared when elected that he would "never lie" to the American people. This was like a new man being selected as CEO of General Foods and announcing that from now on he planned to bake every General Foods cookie himself in his own kitchen. It didn't take long to teach Carter the ropes.

* * *

You can say that Bush and his colleagues would like to conquer Iraq in order to possess a secure source of oil and to begin a process of controlling the world, but that may not fully account for the strength of their motivation, the evident fervor of their commitment.

Why are we being so ridiculously polite? It's as if there were some sort of gentlemen's agreement that prevents people from stating the obvious truth that Bush and his colleagues are exhilarated and thrilled by the thought of war, by the thought of the incredible power they will have over so many other people, by the thought of the immensity of what they will do, by the scale, the massiveness of the bombing they're planning, the violence, the killing, the blood, the deaths, the horror.

The love of killing is inside each one of us, and we can never be sure that it won't come out. We have to be grateful if it *doesn't* come out. In fact, it is utterly wrong for me to imagine that Bush is violent and I am not, that Bush is cruel and I am not. I am potentially just as much of a killer as he is, and I need the help of all the sages and poets and musicians and saints to guide me onto a better path, and I can only hope that the circumstances of my life will continue to be ones that help me to stay on that path. But we can't deny that Bush and his men, for whatever reason, are under the sway of the less peaceful side of their natures. From the first days after the World Trade Center fell, you could see in their faces that, however scary it might be to be holding the jobs they held, however heavy the responsibility might be for steering the ship of state in such troubled times, they in fact were loving it. Those faces glowed. You could see that special look that people always have when they've just been seized by that most purposeless of all things, a sense of purpose. This, combined with a lust for blood, makes for particularly dangerous leaders, so totally driven by their desire for violence that they're almost incapable of hearing anyone else's pleas for compromise or for peace.

Why do they want this war so much? Maybe we can never fully know the answer to that question. Why do some people want to be whipped by a dominatrix? Why do some people want so desperately to have sex with children that they can't prevent themselves from raping them, even though they know that what they're doing is wrong? Why did Hitler want to kill the Jews? Why do some people collect coins? Why do some people collect stamps?

We can't fully understand it. But it's clear that Bush and his group are in the grip of something. They're very far gone. Their narcissism and sense of omnipotence goes way beyond self-confidence, reaching the point that they're impervious to the disgust they provoke in others, or even oblivious to it. They've made very clear to the people of the world that they value American interests more than the world's interests and American profits more than the world's physical health, and yet they cheerfully expect the people of the world to accept their leadership in the matter of Iraq. They're so unshakable in their belief that everyone will like them that they happily summoned the world, a year ago, to observe what they'd done to the people they'd taken as prisoners, proudly exhibiting them on their knees in cages, under a ferocious sun, with their faces hooded and their bodies in chains. In other words, the only thing you can really say about them is that like all of those who for fifty years have sat in offices in Washington and dreamed of killing millions of enemies with nuclear weapons and chemical weapons and biological weapons, these people are sick. They have an illness. And it's getting to the point where there may be no cure.

Meanwhile, I read my *New York Times*, and it's all very calm. The people who write there seem to have a need to believe that their government, while sometimes wrong, of course, is not utterly insane, and must at least be trusted to raise the right questions. These writers just can't bear the thought of being completely alienated from the center of their society, their own government. Thus, although they themselves would have considered

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a "pre-emptive" invasion of Iraq two years ago to be absurd and crazy, they now take the idea seriously and weigh its merits respectfully and worry gravely about the danger posed by Iraq, even though Iraq is in no way more dangerous than it was two years ago, and in every possible way it is less dangerous.

In fact, the dispassionate tone of the "debate" about Iraq in the *New York Times* and on every television screen seems psychotically remote from the reality of what will happen if war actually occurs. We are talking about raining death down on human beings, about thousands and thousands of howling wounded human beings, dismembered corpses in pools of blood. Is this one of the "lessons of Vietnam" that people have learned—that the immorality of this unspeakable murdering must never be mentioned? That the discussion of murder must never mention murder, and that even the critics of murder must always criticize it because it turns out not to be in our own best interest? Must these critics always say that the murders would come at too high a price for *us*, would be too expensive, would unbalance the budget, hurt the economy, cause us to stint on domestic priorities; that it would lose us our friends, that it would create new enemies? Can we never say that this butchering of human beings is horrifying and wrong?

Yesterday I walked through a neighborhood of shabby apartment buildings on shabby streets, and I ate lunch in a lousy restaurant. The bread a bit hard, and the lettuce was rather stiff and resistant. But the thing was, honestly, it wasn't that bad. I could survive some lousiness, some uncomfortableness, some decline. Back on the street, I kept walking for a while and wondered what would happen if we allowed some of the fossils to simply lie there under the sand, if we decided not to try to dominate the world. We'd have no control over what would happen. We'd let go and fall. How far would we sink? How far? How far? Sure, it's been great, the life of comfort and predictability. But imagine how it would feel if we could be on a path of increasing compassion, diminishing brutality, diminishing greed—I think it might actually feel wonderful to be alive. ■

FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY, FRIENDS SHARE STORIES OF PROTEST.

Antiwar America

If the February 15 peace demonstrations proved that there truly is strength in numbers, the stories below go to show the power of one—or two, ten or a hundred. To offer a close-up look at some of the more localized and innovative forms of antiwar activity across the United States, The Nation *asked members of its Associates program to share stories of protest from their hometowns. From almost 250 responses—from Arkansas to Arizona, Montana to Maine—here are some highlights.* —*The Editors*

RYAN INZANA

ELLEN HANSEN, 49, Emporia, KS
Assistant professor of geography, Emporia State University

It started out in response to September 11, in the immediate aftermath to how militaristic the response was. A group of us got together, and that's when we started reading information in our square in front of the student union—every afternoon reading about civil liberties and other issues.

When that toned down, we started our demonstrations on the corner off-campus holding NO BLOOD FOR OIL and NO TO WAR signs. It's a small group, ten to fifteen people. The city is a little less than 30,000, and everybody in the group is from campus. There have been times when there were three of us out there. We get a couple of students who hold a sign that says HONK FOR PEACE, and we get a lot of people honking and flashing peace signs. We get a lot of nasty things, too. People yell at us and flip us off. It was a little scary to take ourselves off-campus in this town. The faculty and students are more progressive than the town is. But we've been getting support from people going by, so maybe it's less conservative than I thought it was.

JOHN KILLEEN, 24, Chestertown, MD
Student, Washington College

On February 27 the International Studies Council (ISC), a student organization, hosted a Security Council simulation in which we debated the US/UK/Spain resolution. The event was advertised to the campus as an opportunity to understand what the ISC is and how it is dedicated to peaceful resolution of international conflicts through the work of the United Nations. We had representatives for each member of the Security Council, and probably around twenty students came to observe and then debate with us afterward.

Also, the Lysistrata Project [one of many worldwide stagings on March 3] drew about fifty people together for performances of scenes from the play, and for poetry and songs. After the event, while we all munched on brownies, a campuswide walkout was organized for March 5 to protest the war.

ROSANNE POTTER, 61, and BILL MCCARTHY, 60, Key West, FL
Retired professors of English, Iowa State University

On December 7 Key West had its annual Christmas parade, and we [Key West Peace Vigil] marched. There were fourteen people, a dog and a rooster. We were very well received. On January 18, the day of the international rally, we gathered on a prominent local intersection. There were 175 people, and again

Former Nation *interns Kathryn Lewis and Emily Biuso compiled this report.*

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we were well received. We had a sign that said HONK IF YOU LOVE PEACE, and lots of people were honking.

We had the Southernmost Concert for Peace on February 15; 358 people signed up, but probably 500 attended. Some of our most committed activists are high school kids. They were standing in the streets before we were.

We got our City Council to vote for a resolution against first strike without UN support. We are brightening the corner where we are.

JOANIE V. CONNORS, PhD, 49, Fayetteville, AR
Assistant professor of educational foundations, University of Arkansas

We've had a peace center, the Omni Center for Peace, Justice and Ecology, here for a couple of years in Fayetteville. When it started to look like the Bush Administration was going to declare war on Iraq we became more active. Now we have a weekly demonstration, held on Saturdays at noon near the Fayetteville mall, where the most hostile audience in town seems to be. People scream things like "Get a job, you commies" and "Bomb Iraq," but we get positive responses too. On a really cold day we may have as few as fifteen people there, and on a really nice day we may have as many as thirty.

ELI PLENK, 12, Cambridge, MA
Student, King Olson's School

We have electives at school, and our group is actually part of a class. Some other kids are doing a newspaper, but one teacher offered political activity. We got to choose a topic, and so we decided to look at the pre-emptive strike against Iraq.

We're doing an arts campaign, and we're also sending a letter to President Bush that we finished about a week ago. We already have a little over 200 signatures. And we have a press release. And of course, there's the City Council thing.

I was the only student from the group who went to the Cambridge City Council. Other people just couldn't come. I talked about how many people in Iraq would die if we went to war and how it was wrong. Most wars really don't need to happen, and Bush is really rushing into this. The resolution passed unanimously, so I think it went pretty well.

GRETCHEN HULL, 56, Newcastle, ME
Part-time professor of oceanography, University of Maine at Augusta; writer

I live in a very small community—there are two towns that together have a population of about 6,000 people. There were a couple of us meeting back in October, and we decided we should do something. For the first few weeks there were just five of us meeting on the Wiscasset Bridge on Sundays at 5 o'clock, with candles. Then we moved the demonstrations to the middle of the day and more people came. There's a real diversity in the group—students and retired people alike.

I stood on a big bridge near the Bath Iron Works alone for a couple of weeks. It was intimidating at first. But it was reassuring to know that there were people out there on other bridges. I thought about the people on the bridge ten miles down the road, and about the effect our presence was having on drivers. I thought maybe it would give some of them the confidence to come out and express their own views. We had 100 people on that bridge last week.

We demonstrate on bridges because whether you think of it as a verb or a noun, bridges are about making connections between people. On the Bath Bridge—and it's quite a long bridge—there's sign after sign after sign, and they carry the same message. Mine says LET'S GIVE PEACE A CHANCE.

MARK PASTERNAK, 48, Coos Bay, OR
Physician

The movement has been slowly building here, starting about six months ago. In Coos Bay people decided they would hold rallies; at first probably about ten people showed up. In Bandon two physician friends of mine, Ken and Janet Bates, helped organize an antiwar rally at the library a few weeks ago. About 150 people came. Our slogan was "Physicians and Nurses for Peace." This is a small community. I think there are only five physicians, actually, and most of us were there.

My 17-year-old son and my wife have been coming to the rallies too. With permission from the North Bend High School, my son put up announcements for last Saturday's rally three times. He says that within twenty minutes they were all taken down by students. It would be good to see far more young people out. I don't think they see that the same people are behind this who were behind Vietnam.

RACHEL ZINMAN, 36, Brooklyn, NY
Senior teacher, Be Yoga studio in Manhattan

My husband and I met [author and prayer leader] James Twyman and joined his e-mail list. He wrote that he was going to be doing a major peace vigil on the 9th of February with a mix of Israelis and Palestinians. He wrote, "Rather than pushing for peace, we're going to *be* peace. We're going to bend the world toward peace." He asked for everyone to gather, so I started, two months before, sending e-mails: "If you'd like to join me in spirit or physically, please do."

On the day, I had invited a lot of people to be with me. I said, "At 12 noon, I'm going to lead this meditation." There were forty-five of us there. A lot of people sat with us, and a lot of people joined us in spirit. They e-mailed me afterward and said, "We could feel it."

I had felt ineffective. I had thought, "How can my voice be heard?" For me, to be able to share this is a way to take action. We were being grateful for the peace that already exists on this earth.

CYNTHIA MCCULLOH, 42, Dillon, MT
Student, University of Great Falls

You ask yourself what you can do. For my mother and me it's trying to get the information out there. The mainstream press isn't doing it. If you watch ABC or CNN, like most people do, then you just don't have all the information.

My mom and I placed an ad in the regional paper out of Butte, called the *Montana Standard*. We got information and quotes off

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the MoveOn.org website from generals and CIA officials, people you would think of as hawks—Wesley Clark, Anthony Zinni, George Tenet, James Webb. We liked these quotes because they were from folks that the Administration would typically be listening to, but isn't. The ad cost $350, and other people chipped in to help cover the cost.

My mom has also had political coffees, where she and her friends just talk about the war. It's totally a new thing for her to invite friends for coffee and talk politics. That's a form of activism that I like to see because it starts people thinking and looking for information, and it spreads.

MATT LEBER, 27, Nashville, TN
Activist and director, Nashville Peace and Justice Center

The movement started in Nashville in July. We started with a rally when Cheney came to town. About 100 people showed up. Since then, we have been building more and more momentum. In October we had the Music City March for Peace—it was the largest peace march in Nashville since the civil rights movement.

We have been holding rallies and teach-ins that allow people to have their voices heard. On February 15 we had a rally in solidarity with those around the world. And on the Monday after, the Faces of "Collateral Damage" peace camp began. Basically, five activists lived under simulated UN-sanction conditions [in Iraq] for five days. The goal was to raise public awareness around the lack of humanity of the sanctions and war to date. It's about raising public consciousness, asking questions.

SUSAN CARLSON, 57, Rome, GA
Collection development coordinator, Rome-Floyd County Library

This is the Bible Belt; it's a staunchly conservative, Bush-supporting area. Until now we have been going to Atlanta, sixty-five miles away, for demonstrations. We wanted to do something locally to show like-minded folks they're not alone.

So I had an antiwar dinner party. I was so frustrated because it seemed like nothing was going on here, and I thought we needed to get organized. It was just another couple and my mother, who is very politically active at 80, and a psychologist, who showed up. We brainstormed about organizing. We all feel that we have to do something to get other people on the bandwagon. So we're going to put an ad in the paper, and we're going to have a rally here in March. We've already got a permit. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

seeking abortion procedures face myriad obstacles. For low-income women, paying for the procedure is one of the most daunting. The 1977 Hyde Amendment bans the use of federal Medicaid dollars for pregnancy terminations, leaving the option to cover abortions with Medicaid dollars up to individual states. Currently, only sixteen states cover medically necessary abortion services for Medicaid recipients, whether by choice or by court order. The National Network of Abortion Funds estimates that one in three low-income women seeking an abortion is forced to carry her pregnancy to term. The result is a fundamentally undemocratic, two-tiered system of healthcare. Middle-class and affluent women are able to exercise their constitutional right to an abortion, while low-income women are left without the resources to do so. In this context, reproductive choice becomes a legal abstraction. Organizations like the New York Abortion Access Fund and the Haven Coalition (havencoalition@yahoo.com) make reproductive choice a reality. You can support NYAAF's work by sending a check to NYAAF, FDR Station, Box 7569, New York, NY 10150.

IRENE XANTHOUDAKIS
NYAAF Board Member

FILMS OF THE INTIFADA

Houston

■ Thanks to Stuart Klawans for his review of the films of the intifada ["Films," Feb. 10]. Another excellent documentary is *Crossing Kalandia*, directed by Sobhi Al-Zobaidi. Sobhi's film of daily life in his home in Ramallah under Israeli tanks and artillery fire in 2002 is moving, funny, tragic, fascinating, humane—a beautiful account of people living under extraordinary stress. I also second Klawans's recommendation of *Hidden Wars of Desert Storm*. It's excellent and most timely. It can be obtained directly from Ungerman's distribution company, FreeWill Productions (818-487-2879; http://hiddenwars.org). It's an effective organizing tool, especially since the last part deals with the US Army's exposure of our own troops to depleted uranium shells.

One more point about Klawans's review of *L'Chayim, Comrade Stalin!* and Birobidzhan. The Soviets chose a location hundreds of miles east of the Caspian Sea for the Jewish Autonomous Region because it was reputedly the ancestral homeland of the Kazars, whose elite converted to Judaism in the ninth century after the Kazars migrated west to the region south of present-day Kiev and became a regional power. Caught between the Byzantine Empire and the Caliphate of Baghdad, the Kazar kings saw Judaism as a way to reap the benefits of "book monotheism" as a unifying cultural force without opening the kingdom to undue influence of Christianity or Islam. DAVID H. SLAVIN

PLEASE DON'T GET ALONG

Iowa City

■ I have been contemplating the letters in the February 10 issue that emphasize the need for current and former *Nation* writers to "work together" and ask if we are not all "more or less on the same side." "Amen," the editors reply.

In a practical, organization-minded, activist way, I agree. But in other, perhaps more important ways, I beg to differ. Our arguments—our passionate quests, our belief in what we know to be true—are essential to our human experience. To work together, to build a coalition, to figure out the ways we are on the same side, are good and honest goals, and ones that must be pursued. But if to do so you must sacrifice the thing most dear to you, the thing you most know to be true—to do that is to betray not only yourself, but also the very thing that makes us human.

So have at it—work together, but keep up the fight. LAURA E. CROSSETT

CALLING FOR PEACE

Rochester, NY

■ Thank you for the sharp and timely call to arms by Walter Mosley, "An African-American Appeal for Peace" [Jan. 27]. We were particularly struck by the statement: "Our collective freedom, fellow Americans, depends on our ability to defend the rights of others." This is a perfect complement to the statement by excommunicated Episcopal priest Algernon Crapsey at an African-American church in Washington, DC, around 1900. To wit: "When you fail to fight for your rights, you also betray mine." This is powerful stuff.

We wish the Democrats would fight for themselves when so regularly and freely trampled by the Republicans. We wish the Democrats would fight to promote our interests and defend our rights. BILL AND SALLY MCCOY

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COMMENT

(Continued From Page 7)

group of men, convey exhilaration while giving viewers folks with whom to identify. The men we meet (there is one woman we hear from fleetingly) are indeed patriotic, gutsy and altruistic, but it is clear they have been carefully vetted for the show. No one is afraid. Everyone is thrilled to be in Afghanistan. ("We're going out catching bad guys," notes one soldier. "I'm having a good time doing that.") No one gets hurt. No one gets sick. Everyone is efficient and extremely careful. Everyone sees violence as a last resort.

The *cinéma vérité* techniques insist that everything we are seeing is "real." So it is especially dismaying to hear the discredited assertions that Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda are in cahoots parroted without any contradiction. The USS Hue City, a guided-missile cruiser in the North Arabian Sea, stops an Iraqi freighter to see if it's smuggling oil in violation of UN sanctions. As we see Petty Officer Matthew Klemm searching one Iraqi's effects, he says, "I don't feel funny about going through anybody's personal stuff, 'cause they wiped out how many thousands of people's personal stuff at the World Trade Center.... If this stops it from happening again, so be it." He then finds an address book, which he declares could provide contacts with Al Qaeda, and he suggests that the shipping company "is part of a bigger picture."

To leave viewers with the right levels of testosterone, the first episode ends with the broad-grinned, cocky John "Champ" Killen, maintenance supervisor for the top-gun planes on the Kennedy. "I love what we do. It's high-paced and action-packed...I loooove it!" he exclaims. He warns that it is "payback" time. "When we say it's over, that's when it's going to be over. Until then, better stay home and run, son. We're comin' to get ya.... Getting ready to drop some hot iron, is what we like to say." He then gives us a big thumbs-up.

Assessing the immediate impact of such propaganda is not easy. After all, *Profiles* (5.9 million viewers) didn't stand a chance against *Friends* (17.5 million). Nonetheless, what should be of utmost concern here is the creep of such meticulously scripted DOD-sponsored cant into prime time. Last spring, the Pentagon vetted a script for *JAG* that cast military tribunals as cozier than a *Matlock* courtroom. The deployment of high-end production values by television's entertainment divisions provides especially effective camouflage for the selling of militarism and empire-building that will result not in broad grins and high-fives but in real-life death and destruction. SUSAN J. DOUGLAS

Susan J. Douglas is professor of communication studies at the University of Michigan.

Dissent and Basketball

During the Vietnam War the heavyweight boxing champion of the world, Muhammad Ali, refused to serve in the Army. During the Gulf War, Craig Hodges, a journeyman player for the championship Chicago Bulls, spoke out against the war and American racism. And in the lead-up to a potential second war on Iraq we have...Toni Smith, senior captain of a Division III women's basketball team at Manhattanville College, a small school in the suburbs of New York City, who spent her last season in the crossfire for refusing to salute the flag. She issued only a brief statement explaining her actions: "For some time now, the inequalities that are embedded into the American system have bothered me," she wrote. "I can no longer, in good conscience, salute the flag. The war America will soon be entering in has reinforced my beliefs."

Incredibly, Smith's silent, solitary, nonviolent protest resulted in a huge number of sports-page articles, furious letters to the editor, rants on sports talk-radio and more than a million hits to the college's website. We have to wonder whether an obscure 21-year-old would have caused the media storm she did if this country weren't so divided, anxious and fearful about the threat of war—and if dissent among big-time athletes hadn't become so exceedingly rare.

One Vietnam vet ran onto the court to wave the Stars and Stripes in Smith's face, saying, "She didn't earn the right to disrespect the flag." Three hundred merchant marine cadets showed up to chant, "Leave our country!" Mets superstar Mike Piazza criticized Smith, saying, "You shouldn't disrespect your sport to catapult your political views." The *Boston Herald* called her, not atypically, a "silly, dour ingrate."

But as Filip Bondy, who covered Smith sympathetically for the New York *Daily News*, wrote, "If sports events are inappropriate forums for political statements, then what exactly is 'The Star Spangled Banner'?" So Piazza's recent comments to *Newsday* expressing support for Bush and the death penalty spark no sports-page furor; regular displays of militarism at sporting events, such as the Air Force flyovers at Super Bowl time, go without comment; and a minor college athlete becomes an antiwar celebrity for breaking ranks.

"Who would care about a Division III basketball player?" Smith said to *The Nation* at the close of her stormy season. "If I wanted to make a public statement, it would not be this way. I wasn't trying to advance my political views, and I gave it a lot of thought. It's personal. I won't salute the flag anymore because the flag means certain things I have issues with."

Smith told *The Nation* that students and faculty at Manhattanville were supportive, likely because of the stand taken by college president Richard Berman. Where many of his peers might have pressured a dissenter to tone it down (as it appears administrators did at one basketball powerhouse, the University of Virginia, calling a freshman ballplayer in for a meeting after she briefly followed Smith's lead), Berman risked offending trustees, alumni and prospective parents by standing with her. "Her right of expression is fundamental," he said, "and we support her."

Toni Smith and her critics are miles apart, but her protest should remind her far more cautious fellow athletes that it's their country too, in bad times as well as good. MURRAY POLNER

Murray Polner is the author of Branch Rickey: A Biography, No Victory Parades: The Return of the Vietnam Veteran *and, with Jim O'Grady,* Disarmed and Dangerous *(Westview), a biography of Daniel and Philip Berrigan.*

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

War and Remembrance

HUGH EAKIN

ON THE NATURAL HISTORY OF DESTRUCTION.
By W.G. Sebald. Translated by Anthea Bell. Random House. 202 pp. $23.95.

CRABWALK.
By Günter Grass. Translated by Krishna Winston. Harcourt. 234 pp. $25.

In a provocative book published recently in Germany, a Hamburg scholar named Klaus Briegleb appeared to take on the entire national literary establishment for indulging in self-censorship of the most dangerous kind. Titled *Neglect and Taboo: How Anti-Semitic Was the Group 47?*, the book puts forth a kind of conspiracy theory about the writers who laid the intellectual foundations of West Germany after the war. By setting the ground rules for the new literature, Briegleb argues, these members of the so-called Group '47—among them Hans Werner Richter, Alfred Andersch, Heinrich Böll and a younger generation including Günter Grass and Martin Walser—banished the Nazi past to silence, even as they purposefully nurtured its democratic opposite.

For a group often associated with the anti-Fascist left, the notion seems farfetched. Grass, for one, has for decades invoked Auschwitz as an ever-present reality in German life. But Briegleb's polemic nonetheless stirred up considerable interest as a counterpoint to a far larger debate about the role of taboos in literature—one that is traceable to W.G. Sebald, most known in the United States for his novels *Austerlitz* and *The Rings of Saturn*. In 1997, Sebald gave a series of lectures on "Air War and Literature" in which he contested that, indeed, German writers had remained virtually mum about certain aspects of the Nazi years. His primary concern, however, was not German guilt but German suffering—namely the deaths of some 600,000 civilians during the Allied bombardment, which he argued had never been adequately rendered in prose:

> There was a tacit agreement, equally binding on everyone, that the true state of material and moral ruin in which the country found itself was not to be described. The darkest aspects of the final act of destruction, as experienced by the great majority of the German population, remained under a kind of taboo like a shameful family secret, a secret that perhaps could not even be privately acknowledged.

Even before their 1999 publication in German—and now in English in the posthumous volume titled *On the Natural History of Destruction*—Sebald's lectures were received as a general indictment of late-twentieth-century German writing. "Was there and is there for writers a ban on representation, a story-telling taboo, that must finally be overcome today?" wrote Volker Hage, the chief book critic of *Der Spiegel*, in a much-discussed essay on Sebald a few months after the lectures. After conducting his own literary survey, Hage decided there was, and concluded that what was needed was little short of a revolution: "Could it be that German postwar literature will truly only begin at the end of the century, at the turn of the millennium?"

There was tacit agreement that the 'state of material and moral ruin in which [Germany] found itself was not to be described.'

To Group '47 veterans like Grass and Walser, Hage's call has proven irresistible, or at least prophetic. Walser, who is as known for his taboo-breaking statements as his excellent fiction, led the way, first with an autobiographical war novel, *A Bubbling Spring* (a metaphor of the author's discovery of language), and then, this past summer, with a hugely controversial contemporary satire, *Death of a Critic*. *A Bubbling Spring* is set in rural southern Germany and describes—without men-

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tioning the Holocaust—a civilian youth's experiences during the Nazi period; *Death of a Critic* takes aim at a leading real-life German critic, who is Jewish, breaking a supposed taboo on the negative or ironic portrayal of Jewish characters in German fiction.

Grass, in turn, has taken up the issue of German victims with calculated effort in *Crabwalk*, a 200-page novel based on the Russian torpedoing of the German ship *Wilhelm Gustloff* in early 1945. Though the Baltic Sea tragedy caused more than 9,000 civilian deaths and ranks as the worst naval disaster of all time, it had been all but banished from German memory: "No one wanted to hear the story," Grass's narrator says. "For decades, the *Gustloff* and its awful fate were taboo."

Grass is pained over his generation's sin of omission: 'Why only now?' the first chapter of Crabwalk *begins, as if anticipating criticism.*

By late last summer, *Der Spiegel*, which had been pouring fuel on the fire with a big series on the fate of German civilians in the eastern territories of the Third Reich, was talking excitedly about a "choreographed taboo break" and a "risky game with German history." Then, in November, historian Jörg Friedrich focused the debate squarely on Sebald's theme of aerial bombardment, with the publication of *Der Brand* ("The Fire"), a comprehensive account of the Allied air offensive that describes the British and American bomber commands in language hitherto reserved for the Nazis. A bestseller in Germany, the book sparked outrage in London, where (without apparent access to the German text) the British press proceeded to carpet-bomb what it took to be unprincipled revisionism.

It is tempting to ask what Sebald would have made of these developments. An expatriate who spent much of his life in Norwich, England, not far from "more than seventy airfields from which the war of annihilation was waged against Germany," he died in a car accident in 2001. With the English-language publication this spring of both *On the Natural History of Destruction* and *Crabwalk*, at least, it is now possible to consider Sebald's thesis in full next to one of its most important responses. Where Sebald takes aim at those writing early after the war who "hardly seemed to notice the horrors which, at the time, surrounded them on all sides," Grass is at pains to atone for his generation's sin of omission: "Why only now?" the first chapter of *Crabwalk* begins, as if anticipating the criticism even before the reader has begun.

By Sebald's account, *On the Natural History of Destruction* was not intended as a manifesto. The air war lectures, he writes, were conceived "as merely a rough-and-ready collection of various observations, materials, and theses," and even after substantial revision, the published version retains a disjointed feel. Sebald presents less a linear argument than an accumulation of meanings filtered through lapidary descriptions, personal musings, historical notes and, above all, literary criticism. (The heavily edited excerpt that appeared in November in *The New Yorker* has a far more directed feel, much of the text's open-endedness having been eliminated.) As in Sebald's elegant works of fiction, there is, running through the veins of the lectures, an autobiographical pulse:

> I spent my childhood and youth on the northern outskirts of the Alps, in a region that was largely spared the immediate effects of the so-called hostilities. At the end of the war I was just one year old, so I can hardly have any impressions of that period of destruction based on personal experience. Yet to this day, when I see photographs or documentary films dating from the war I feel as if I were its child, so to speak, as if those horrors I did not experience cast a shadow over me, and one from which I shall never entirely emerge.

This shadow, he says, had

> haunted my mind, and finally impelled me to go at least a little way into the question of why German writers would not or could not describe the destruction of the German cities as millions experienced it.

But much of Sebald's self-reflection (including the above passages) has in published form been relegated to an epilogue. The 1999 German edition was complemented with an essay on Alfred Andersch, a Group '47 writer of considerable repute in the early years after the war and, Sebald says, "a good example of the unfortunate consequences" of the literary conformism he identifies in the silence about the Nazi era. The posthumous English edition of *On the Natural History of Destruction* further includes two other literary essays, so that the air war lectures now make up only the first half of the book.

The overall effect of these changes is to present the lectures themselves as criticism—a kind of discursive commentary on the writers who did attempt to address the devastation of German cities. The list is surprisingly long, but few, if any, are up to the task: Hermann Kasack, whose *The City Beyond the River* (1947) Sebald regards as the "key text" in this group, is guilty of "ignoring the appalling reality of collective catastrophe" and reverting to "the code of the Fascist intellectual world." Other contemporaries fare no better: Hans Erich Nossack indulges in "false notions of transcendence"; Arno Schmidt buries himself in "linguistic fretwork"; Peter de Mendelssohn is just plain "embarrassing."

Only *The Angel Was Silent*, a little-known Heinrich Böll work "marked by irremediable gloom," and a passage in a 1968 novel by Hubert Fichte meet with significant praise. As Sebald notes, however, the Böll novel remained unpublished for almost fifty years; and the Fichte text, which he calls "a very plausible literary approach" to the Allies' destruction of Hamburg on July 27, 1943, is actually not literature at all but rather a take from a contemporary autopsy report. The appeal, Sebald explains, is "the information value of such authentic documents, before which all fiction pales."

While not, strictly speaking, an "authentic document," Günter Grass's *Crabwalk* does set out to create what he terms a "literary assessment" of German suffering. Like the bombing campaign, the sinking of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* was, despite almost sixty years of neglect, an event of epic destruction. Stuffed with some 10,000 German refugees fleeing from the fast-encroaching Red Army—including, we are told, some 4,500 infants and children, 1,000 U-boat sailors and 370 young women's naval auxiliaries—the giant but poorly equipped *Gustloff* set sail from the Silesian port of Gotenhafen on January 30, 1945, and headed west, toward Kiel. That evening, in the frigid waters of the Bay of Danzig, the ship was torpedoed three times at close range by the Soviet submarine S-13. It went down with some 1,200 survivors.

But the *Gustloff* tragedy did survive in the subconscious of postwar Germany, Grass suggests, tormenting the few who remembered it as a symbol of the national self-censorship that reigned after 1945. In fact, the *Gustloff* represented a double taboo: It was named for Wilhelm Gustloff,

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a Nazi "martyr" who was assassinated by a Jew named David Frankfurter in 1936.

Even now, Grass finds himself inhibited, though the calamity cries out for "a German requiem or a maritime *danse macabre*." Thus he creates Paul Pokriefke, a present-day, middle-aged hack journalist, as his first-person narrator. "Now it was too late for him," Paul says of Grass. "He hadn't invented me as a surrogate, rather he had discovered me, after a long search, on the list of survivors, like a piece of lost property."

Pokriefke is both far more and far less than a Grass stand-in. A kind of German Everyman, his life is inextricably linked to the *Gustloff* tragedy: He escaped the torpedoed ship in the womb of Tulla, his unwed mother, who had been in the hospital ward on an upper deck; and he was born on a rescue boat. Growing up in East Germany, he escapes to the West shortly before the Berlin wall goes up, becoming a journalist and traveling across the political spectrum from right to left and back again, mimicking the course of German society. Today, his baggage includes Tulla, his East German mother; a divorced West German wife; and Konrad, his right-wing-sympathizing son. (Readers of Grass will recognize Tulla Pokriefke from *Dog Years* and *Cat and Mouse*, in which she appears as a young woman in Danzig before and during the war.)

With these accoutrements, it quickly becomes apparent that *Crabwalk* is as much an allegory of postwar Germany as a tale of forgotten history. Tulla, representing the shamed war generation, is obsessed by the *Gustloff* tragedy, which, for different reasons, neither the East nor the West Germans were willing to discuss; Paul, as the democratically committed child of war, would rather forget it; Konrad, the confused teenager, is inevitably drawn to the grandmother and her untold story via neo-Nazi fringe groups, the only forum he finds to exchange information about the event.

In tight, laconic prose, the parallel stories of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* and Paul's belated quest into his past unfold. Paul soon discovers that he is competing with his son to piece together the tragedy. Konrad, already a few steps ahead of him, has established a right-wing website with a slanted version of the facts. Paul discovers a chat room devoted to the *Gustloff* in which someone whom he suspects is Konrad uses the virtual name "Wilhelm," after the Nazi martyr, to exchange racially edged barbs with another user who goes by "David," the Jewish assassin.

The tension builds as Grass traces the twin paths of the *Gustloff* and the captain of the enemy S-13 submarine in the years, months and minutes preceding the tragedy. In the crablike fashion of the book's title, Grass—as Paul—closes in on his literary prey, steps back, lunges forward again, before finally attacking it, head on, in a few pages of cool, documentary reportage. The reader is taken aboard the different parts of the ship and made to feel the agony of the final moments, but also shown the mood on the submarine and Soviet feelings about Germany; the weather is described and the botched rescue detailed.

But the narrative cannot be sustained. Paul abruptly pulls us back to the present, where Konrad, who can no longer be rescued from his revisionist account of the *Gustloff* story, has planned out a fateful encounter of his own. At Konrad's instigation, the virtual "Wilhelm" and "David" have agreed to a real-life meeting at the site of a since-destroyed memorial to the Nazi martyr Gustloff. As we gradually discover, David, who is a contemporary of Konrad's, is but yet another postwar German character type, the anti-Nazi:

> At the age of fourteen, [he] adopted the name David and became so obsessed with thoughts of atonement for the wartime atrocities and mass killings, which, God knows, were constantly harped on in our society, that eventually everything Jewish became somehow sacred to him.

So, history is fated to repeat—or reverse—itself, and, in somewhat melodramatic fashion, the Wilhelm-David meeting, like the original Gustloff-Frankfurter encounter and the ship-submarine engagement, can only culminate in tragedy.

There is much to be said for Grass's cutting take on German society, and his characters speak to many real phenomena—the right-wing movement on the Internet; the recent trend of obsessive philo-Semitism; the profound generational divides—that have arisen out of suppression of the past. The historical story that Grass is at such pains to retrieve, however, is trumped by its own telling, with the event itself reduced by the contrived contemporary setup in which it is framed.

All this taboo-breaking is too late, and Grass wants us to know he knows it. Even as he writes, he acknowledges that history can no longer be rendered without addressing the social ills its neglect has produced, and *Crabwalk* is peppered with authorial *mea culpas*:

> This business has been gnawing at the old boy. Actually, he says, his generation should have been the one. It should have found words for the hardships endured by Germans fleeing East Prussia: the westward treks in the depths of winter, people dying in blinding snowstorms, expiring by the side of the road or in holes in the ice when the frozen bay known as Frisches Haff began to break up under the weight of horse-drawn carts after being hit by bombs.... Never, he said, should his generation have kept silent about such misery, merely because its own sense of guilt was so overwhelming, merely because for years the need to accept responsibility and show remorse took precedence, with the result that they abandoned the topic to the right wing. This failure, he says, was staggering.

There is perhaps too much effort in this self-criticism, which is, after all, a profession of guilt about having too much guilt. In the end, *Crabwalk* succumbs to the same weakness Sebald identifies in the literary culture that preceded it: In his essay on Andersch, Sebald makes a devastating critique of a writer who worked for the Nazis and morally compromised himself during the war, only to transform his past into resistance and internal exile in his postwar writings. Sebald implies that such reworking of the past may indeed have contributed to the vacuum that produced right-wing extremism as well as the neglect of Germany's own hour of defeat.

By making their own taboos taboo, Grass and his colleagues are like those writers, immediately after the war, whose "redefinition of their idea of themselves" highlighted the unsatisfactory nature of literary atonement. As Sebald concludes in his preface to *On the Natural History of Destruction*, "such a preoccupation with retrospective improvement of the self-image they wished to hand down was one of the main reasons for the inability of a whole generation of German authors to describe what they had seen, and to convey it to our minds." ■

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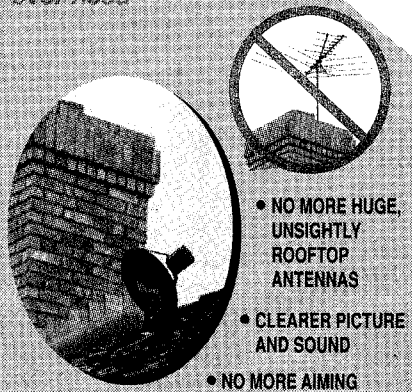

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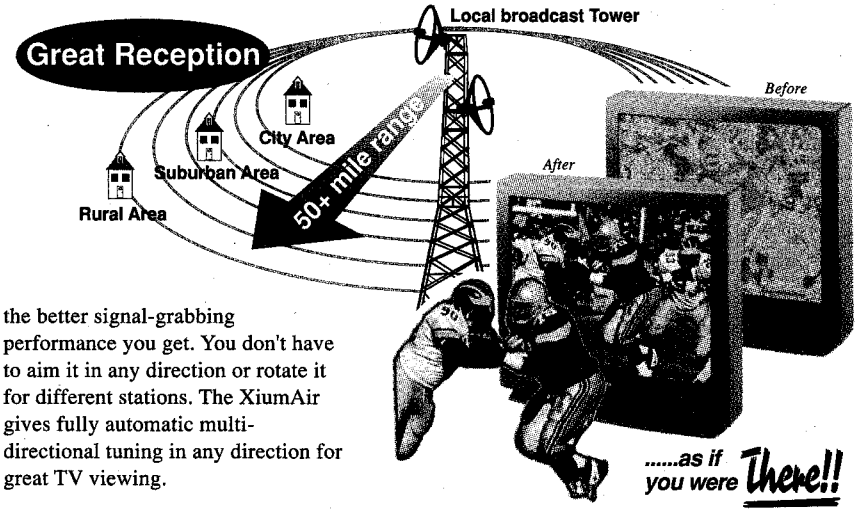

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Guns in the Courtroom

CARL T. BOGUS

OUTGUNNED: Up Against the NRA—The First Complete Insider Account of the Battle Over Gun Control.
By Peter Harry Brown and Daniel G. Abel. Free Press. 338 pp. $26.

In the late summer and fall of 1997, small news leaks began appearing that Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia (who is now governor of Pennsylvania) was thinking about suing the firearms industry to recover the medical costs of treating gunshot victims, much as state attorneys general had sued tobacco manufacturers. "Rendell is quietly laying the groundwork for a lawsuit against gun manufacturers," read the first report, bringing a small smile to lips of readers who realized that tipping off the press is not quite consistent with doing something quietly. The leaks provided little information but provoked a great deal of talk. What was actually going on within Rendell's inner circle, however, was shrouded in secrecy.

Then, on January 9, 1998, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that Rendell's lawyers were ready to file. The article identified Temple University law school professor David Kairys and David Cohen, a partner in a leading Philadelphia law firm and one of Rendell's closest confidants, as the principal lawyers. "Kairys declined to discuss the lawsuit," the paper reported, although Kairys did talk to the paper about the legal theory of public nuisance on which, the *Inquirer* said, the lawsuit was to be based.

The Rendell administration never filed that lawsuit. It is my own somewhat educated guess that the leaks had come from Professor Kairys, who was fighting a losing battle with Cohen to persuade Rendell to go ahead with the litigation. Perhaps Cohen thought the lawsuit was technically weak. Or perhaps he thought it a politically foolish endeavor for a politician with statewide ambitions. Nearly 250 rural miles separate Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and nearly 165,000 voting NRA members live in Pennsylvania. In any event, there was no suit. Rendell decided instead to try to reach a deal—never ultimately brought to fruition—in which Philadelphia would not file suit in return for the gun industry's agreeing to certain reforms and the NRA's lobbying Congress to fund a special project of aggressive federal prosecutions of gun crimes in Philadelphia.

But others seized upon the idea. Something of a race began among the nation's mayors to see who would take the lead in this movement, as Mississippi's Attorney General Michael Moore had in the tobacco litigation. New Orleans's charismatic mayor, Marc Morial, won the race to the courthouse. The authors of *Outgunned: Up Against the NRA—The First Complete Insider Account of the Battle Over Gun Control* tell us that when, in October 1998, Rendell learned New Orleans was about to file an action against handgun manufacturers, their trade associations and pawn shops selling guns used in crimes in New Orleans, he telephoned Mayor Morial. "This is my deal!" he allegedly screamed. "So back off and let me proceed. I'm damned close to reaching a settlement with the gun companies."

Morial was unmoved. On October 30, New Orleans filed its action against fifteen handgun manufacturers, their trade associations and New Orleans pawn shops that were selling handguns. On November 12 Chicago filed its own lawsuit. Miami and Bridgeport, Connecticut, which were represented by the same lawyers, filed separate actions in their home states on January 27, 1999; Cleveland filed on April 9; and consolidated actions were filed by Detroit and Wayne County, Michigan, on April 26.

In the midst of this burst of legal activity, on April 20, 1999, two students, armed with a TEC DC-9 semiautomatic assault pistol and a small arsenal of other weapons, entered Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, and killed a teacher and twelve students and wounded more than thirty in a span of just minutes. The nation was stunned, and many thought the municipal lawsuits would benefit from a tidal wave of revulsion against the gun violence. Ultimately, thirty-five municipalities—including Boston, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia (which filed after a new mayor replaced Rendell), San Francisco, St. Louis and Washington, DC, plus New York State—filed a total of twenty-four lawsuits against gun manufacturers and dealers.

The actions by Chicago and Detroit/Wayne County, Michigan, were based on especially interesting investigations. In Detroit and Wayne County, two undercover officers visited random retailers and gun-show dealers. In each case, one officer posed as someone who was ineligible to purchase a gun, such as a convicted felon or a minor, and the second officer posed as a "straw purchaser," that is, someone who as a matter of mere formality was willing to list himself as the purchaser on the federal form. In ten instances, the officers surreptitiously filmed the transactions. In nine of these, the dealer sold the gun, even though he knew the real purchaser could not lawfully own a handgun. At the Sports Authority in Dearborn, the salesman explained that a straw purchase was "highly illegal," but he made the sale anyway. "You want to tell me you are buying the gun and you want to lie on the sheet, I don't care," another dealer said. "This question here says, 'Are you buying the gun for yourself?' All of us know you are not." When I saw the film several years ago, it knocked my socks off.

Chicago investigators conducted a more extensive investigation. Handguns are illegal in Chicago, yet the city suffers great gun violence. In 1997, 570 people were shot to death there, including fifty kids no older than 16. Generally there are more than three times as many firearms injuries as deaths, and although Chicago's complaint does not include the figure, it is reasonable to estimate that more than 1,700 other Chicagoans were injured by gun violence that year. In addition, 8,866 were robbed at gunpoint.

The guns used in these crimes are, obviously, imported from out of town. Undercover Chicago detectives, also working in pairs and posing as a wide range of characters who should not have guns, visited gun dealers in adjacent suburbs. According to Chicago's complaint, at B and H Sports an officer told the dealer he wanted two 9-millimeter handguns to deal with a gang member who "ratted me out." He asked for a matched pair to look impressive "when I draw down on" the guy he was after. The dealer asked what he did for a living. "I hang out on the streets," he replied, gesturing to the jacket he wore that identified him

Carl T. Bogus, professor of law at Roger Williams University, is the author of Why Lawsuits Are Good for America: Disciplined Democracy, Big Business and the Common Law *(NYU). He also edited* The Second Amendment in Law and History *(New Press).*

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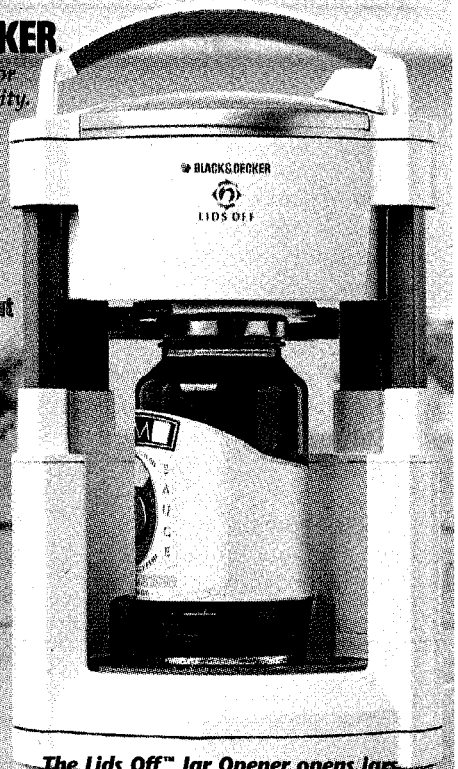

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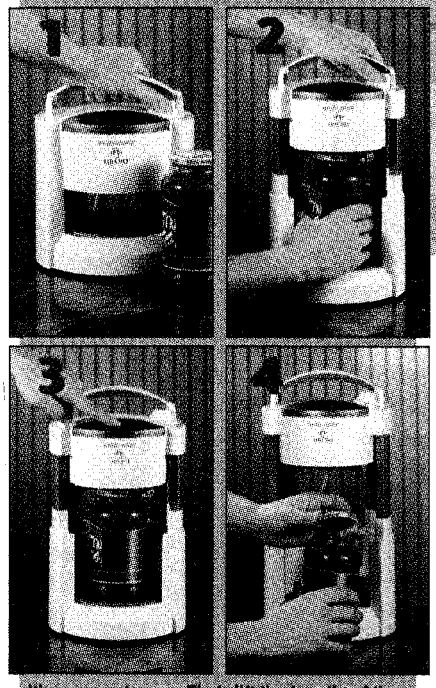

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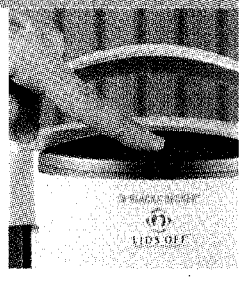

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as a member of a street gang. Because he did not have proper identification, his companion served as a straw purchaser. "If you wait four days to pick up the guns, the Feds won't be out to investigate you," the helpful clerk suggested. At Bell's Gun & Sport Shop, an undercover officer posing as a customer without identification handed $600 in cash to his partner, who in turn immediately handed it over to the clerk. In transactions such as these, Chicago officers purchased 171 guns.

It is easy to understand why the cities sued the gun dealers, but what was the theory against the manufacturers? Making use of recent innovations in gathering and analyzing data about the gun distribution system, Chicago and Detroit/Wayne County argued that the manufacturers were selling their guns to dealers that the manufacturers knew were routinely selling guns to criminals.

The conventional wisdom used to be that criminals acquire most of their guns by stealing them. But one of the most interesting recent discoveries in this area has been that criminals seem to buy most of their guns. Moreover, there appears to be a small collection of dealers who knowingly cater to the criminal trade. We have learned, for example, that less than 1 percent of the nation's gun dealers sell the majority of guns that are ultimately used in crimes.

What we now know, how we learned it and why we didn't learn it earlier requires a little background. Serial numbers are carved into guns, which makes it possible to keep records that track them from manufacturer to distributor to dealer to purchaser. The NRA, however, has always opposed any consolidated system of recording gun sales by serial number, arguing that it would lead to the evil of gun registration. Why is gun registration evil if motor vehicle registration is not? The NRA argues that if the government knew who owned what guns, when some future Hitler came to power in the United States he would use these records to seize all the guns and prevent the citizens from overthrowing the yoke of tyranny. At the NRA's behest, Congress enacted legislation prohibiting the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) from requiring gun sellers—manufacturers, distributors or retailers—to report all gun sales and matching guns and purchasers.

Congress, however, did not prohibit ATF from tracing guns that have been used in crimes. Traditionally, ATF used gun traces only to solve crimes. When a gun was found at a crime scene and the identity of the perpetrator was not known, ATF initiated a trace request with the manufacturer, and tried to track the gun through the distribution system to the ultimate purchaser. ATF used to initiate about 40,000 of these gun traces annually. In an effort to discover how so many juveniles came into possession of guns, the Clinton Administration instructed ATF to expand the program and trace the sale histories of all guns used in crimes in the nation's largest cities, regardless of whether it was necessary to solve a crime. Under this program, gun traces increased to about 200,000 per year, and we learned that a tiny fraction of dealers are selling most of the guns ultimately used in crimes.

Conventional wisdom was that criminals got guns by stealing them. But now we've discovered criminals seem to buy most of their guns.

There is debate about what this means. Some argue that it means nothing more than that some dealers sell many more guns than others. However, other information suggests that there are particularly irresponsible dealers, and distributors who serve them. And because ATF trace requests start with the manufacturers, the manufacturers know exactly who these bad distributors and dealers are.

Chicago's undercover investigation showed, in dramatic detail, how these sales were made. For example, Chicago undercover detectives visited one store—Chuck's Gun Shop and Pistol Range in the Chicago suburb of Riverdale, Illinois—seventeen times. They got to know the clerks so well the clerks came to greet them by their first names. Although the detectives told the clerk they lived in Chicago, over the course of these visits Chuck's sold them a small arsenal of semiautomatic pistols, assault rifles and large-capacity magazines, some of which were banned by federal law. The clerks helpfully told the undercover investigators how to structure the transactions to avoid ATF attention.

Chicago combined the undercover investigation with what it learned about Chuck's sales to real criminals. For example, Chicago alleged that between August 1997 and July 1998, Ezra Evans purchased thirteen guns from Chuck's. Evans purchased these guns for members of the Gangster Disciples street gang, which controlled narcotics traffic within particular turfs. A 16-year-old member of the Gangster Disciples used one of those guns to kill a Chicago police officer. Chicago's evidence about specific transactions—involving both criminals and undercover officers posing as criminals—dovetails with ATF tracing data, which show that from 1996 to 1998 Chuck's Gun Shop sold 1,176 traced crime guns. This, incidentally, gave Chuck's the distinction of being the second-largest seller of traced guns nationally.

Chicago's legal theory was based on the doctrine of public nuisance. One accepted definition of this is that a "public nuisance is an unreasonable interference with a right common to the general public," including "significant interference with the public health, the public safety, the public peace, the public comfort or public convenience." Chicago argued that in an effort to control gun violence it had enacted strict gun-control regulations, which work as long as residents cannot purchase guns elsewhere. The gun manufacturers and dealers were frustrating its regulation efforts by flooding the adjacent suburbs with far more guns than the suburban demographics support, knowing that many of these guns were being illegally imported into the city. Their conduct created a public nuisance by making Chicago a far more dangerous, and more fearful, place. Two other theories—negligence and products liability—featured prominently in some of the other municipal lawsuits. A lot of the "inside baseball" discussion among lawyers, judges and legal academics is focused on which of these three theories is strongest in this litigation. But in fact, they are all quite similar.

One succinct definition of negligence is departing "from a standard of conduct demanded by the community for the protection of others against unreasonable risk." A dealer is negligent when he sells a gun to someone he knows is irresponsible or, worse, likely to use it in a crime. That someone is negligent by giving something to someone who should not be entrusted with it—a bartender selling drinks to an intoxicated patron whom she knows will drive home, parents handing car keys to their unlicensed child, someone selling explosives to an obviously deranged individual—is so accepted that it has its own label, "negligent entrustment." A manufacturer who sells guns to a dealer whom it knows to be irresponsible is of the very same nature as the dealer who sells guns to a customer it knows to be irresponsible; both actions place others at unreasonable

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risk. When the behavior is continuous and systemic—that is, when one is putting large quantities of guns into irresponsible hands—categorizing it as either negligence or public nuisance is a distinction without a difference.

Products liability is somewhat more complex, and the contours of the doctrine are currently the subject of strong debate, but at the risk of oversimplifying a smidgen, here is a succinct description. Products liability is a strict-liability regime, which means liability does not depend on fault. It does not matter whether the seller was careful or careless; as it is often put, the focus is on the product rather than the seller's conduct. Liability hinges on whether the product was unreasonably dangerous, not whether the manufacturer's conduct was unreasonable.

A product is deemed unreasonably dangerous if the risk it imposes on society at large exceeds its utility. It is important to stress that dangerous products are not subject to liability, only products deemed to be unreasonably dangerous. Cars and knives are both dangerous, but their social utility is so great that no one could successfully argue they are unreasonably dangerous. Certain cars, such as the infamous Pinto, and certain knives, such as switchblades, are candidates for products liability, but not cars or knives generically.

There is a raging debate in the courts and law schools about whether products liability law should be applied generically to an entire product category. The municipalities that relied on products liability theory, therefore, did not argue that all handguns should be subject to strict liability. New Orleans, for example, argued that the defendants' handguns were unreasonably dangerous because they lacked certain safety devices, specifically, load indicators to show that a round remains in the chamber (the gun is still loaded) even if one has removed the magazine, and "smart-gun technology" to prevent the gun from being fired by anyone other than its authorized user. Manufacturers argue that meaningful smart-gun technology—which would recognize someone's handprint, for example—does not exist, while the devices that do exist—like a gun with a radio receiver that will not fire unless it is in close proximity to someone wearing a special broadcast device on a wristband—are merely glorified gun locks. Some municipalities focused their products liability claims on

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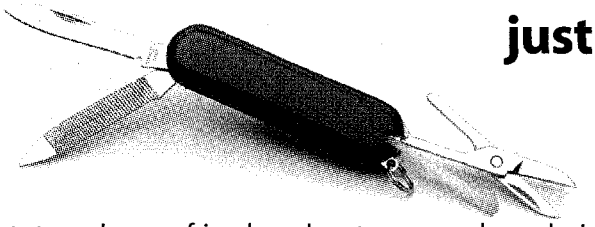

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the small, cheap handguns known as Saturday Night Specials.

Reasonable minds disagree about this, but in my judgment there is an inherent flaw in arguing that only certain handguns—Saturday Night Specials, or those without certain safety devices—are unreasonably dangerous. Most handguns used in crime are not Saturday Night Specials but relatively expensive, high-quality weapons from mainline manufacturers like Smith & Wesson, Colt, Ruger and Mossberg. And while gun-safety devices may reduce accidents or the use of stolen guns, these are fleas on the elephant's back; most shootings are intentional. The raison d'être of guns is their capacity to kill. The additional characteristic of handguns is that they may easily be carried or kept handy in night-stand drawers or automobile glove compartments. The concept of a safe handgun is an oxymoron.

In fact, all handguns fail a risk-utility test. The utility of handguns is almost exclusively about self-defense (long guns are used far more by hunters and sportsmen). In 2001 there were 6,790 handgun murders but only 136 "justifiable homicides" by civilians using handguns for self-defense. By this measure alone, the social costs of handguns outweigh their benefits by a factor of 50 to 1. This is not much different from saying that distributing handguns to the public at large (rather than to just the police and the military) creates a public nuisance or constitutes negligence because it imposes unreasonable risks on others.

The NRA struck back against the municipal lawsuits by lobbying state governments for "pre-emption" statutes prohibiting local governments from suing the gun industry. A number of states passed such laws, extinguishing the lawsuits by Atlanta, Philadelphia and New Orleans, and preventing the filing of additional lawsuits in several states. Boston voluntarily withdrew its lawsuit because it found the litigation too expensive.

Courts have finally dismissed two actions—those by Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Camden County, New Jersey—on the merits, holding that plaintiffs had not shown that manufacturers have control over dealers or that the injuries were "too remote, indirect, or derivative." By contrast, the Ohio Supreme Court held that "it is not fatal to [Cincinnati's] public nuisance claim that appellees did not control the actual firearms at the moment the harm occurred.... Just as the individuals who fire the guns are held accountable for the injuries sustained, appellees can be held liable for creating the alleged nuisance."

As of this writing, sixteen of the twenty-four municipal lawsuits remain pending. Detroit/Wayne County's lawsuit is stalled, waiting for the Michigan courts to determine whether the state's pre-emption statute, which was designed to extinguish the action but was enacted after the case was filed, can constitutionally be applied retroactively. An Illinois appellate court found Chicago's action to be theoretically sound, but that decision is on appeal to the state Supreme Court. No case has yet reached trial.

It will not be lost on the reader that this is an unusual review, for the book has only been mentioned once. That is because this is an unusual book. The co-authors of *Outgunned* are Peter Harry Brown, who has written biographies of Elvis Presley, Kim Novak and Marilyn Monroe, and Daniel G. Abel, one of the lawyers for New Orleans in its lawsuit. What they have produced is a remarkably sloppy, muddled and disjointed hodgepodge of narratives about not only the municipal lawsuits but just about anything related to guns that occurred between October 11, 1998, when a gospel singer was shot to death in New Orleans, and December 15, 2001, the date of the funeral for Wendell Gauthier, the lead attorney on the New Orleans case and Abel's partner. Only small portions of the book concern the municipal lawsuits, which are billed as the subject of the book, and much of what is in this review does not appear in the book.

On more than one occasion, the authors mention someone either just by first or last name whom I had not remembered, causing me to flip back through the pages in a futile search to find what I missed. Then I would move on and find the person introduced pages later. In this and myriad other ways, the authors turned the cut-and-paste function on their word processors into tools of torture.

The municipal lawsuits against the gun industry are important, as a matter of both legal and political history. It is a powerful normative statement when so many of the nation's largest cities, and New York State, institute this kind of litigation. Never again can anyone call such a notion radical or extreme. The subject deserves a good book. But this is not it. ■

Around the World in 80 Ways

ERIC WEINBERGER

DARK STAR SAFARI: Overland From Cairo to Cape Town.
By Paul Theroux. Houghton Mifflin. 472 pp. $28.

In about five years' time, there will be a new Paul Theroux travel book, and it will look like this. It will be about 500 pages, and will describe a trip of months, even a year, from point to point or closing a vast circle. It will have about twenty-five chapters, each named after a relevant train or bus or highway, sometimes a ferry or boat. The author will be traveling alone, but will be meeting people along the way, some of whom he will like, and be moved by. He will probably tell us how he got there, but, having finished—not how he got back, to his writing desk and the months of dry work ahead. He will be irritable, insulting, curious, aroused, listening and judgmental; the trip will be about him, his reactions, his Africa or England or China, whatever it is. Except that he has written about those places already, in fat books like his latest, *Dark Star Safari: Overland From Cairo to Cape Town*; looking at the atlas for places he has missed, only Canada suggests itself, from the Maritimes to the Yukon by choo-choo or perhaps the old hitchhiker's thumb; or maybe the Happy Isles of the Caribbean, where on visiting Trinidad he can write about his former friend V.S. Naipaul—another trademark of nearly all Theroux's nonfiction.

Paul Theroux is a polarizing figure—most people I know who have read him can't bear his opinionating—but why are they reading him, anyway? Expecting the travel writer to be free of snap judgment or bad temper or idle speculation or blind ignorance is asking him to be something exceptional: moderate, objective, restrained, analytical, dispassionate and, especially, "fair." Travel writing is not for moral relativists, as I discovered trying to teach a course on it three years ago to fresh-faced undergraduates brought up to look on all

Eric Weinberger teaches expository writing at Harvard University.

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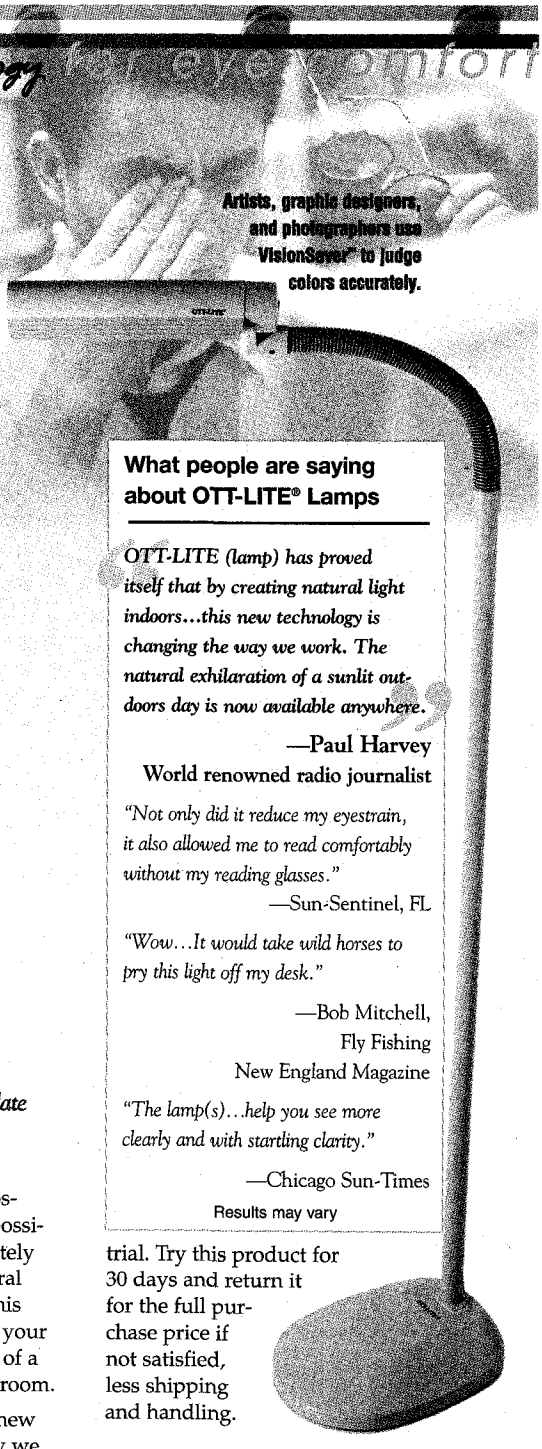

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cultures, all people, as equally remarkable and praiseworthy under the sun. They couldn't stand the dark severe pronouncements of Naipaul or Theroux, the erupting emotions and jittery, rude exchanges between the Westerner (a rather complicated question in Naipaul's case) and the native. Travel writing, they expected, would be sunny and warm like the bright places the travel writer visited. But as Theroux has written, in *The Pillars of Hercules*, "all that jauntiness seems like boasting to me, and dishonest boasting too, since the writers must be hiding so much misery"; and in *Granta* fourteen years ago, "I had done enough travelling to know that half of it was delay or nuisance—buses breaking down and hotel clerks being rude and market traders being rapacious."

And so to Africa in the millennial year, where all the same things happen, with buses, clerks, traders and more—armed bandits, relentless begging children, officious small-time officials, soldiers and policemen, dazed Western tourists, dolled-up prostitutes raddled with AIDS and aid workers, here called "agents of virtue," who won't give Theroux rides in their shiny white jeeps, or other casual assistance. The subject of aid and Africa is its own tremendous subtopic within Theroux's book, which this reviewer is not qualified to assess. The charitable way to consider it is as a diversion, for its "tone of melodrama among relief workers, charity in Africa frequently being a form of theater." Theroux picking fights with agents of virtue, or watching them go about self-importantly with their cell phones, evokes a certain malicious pleasure worth briefly savoring. The more sobering possibility is that Western aid is more than a waste of time, imprisoning Africans in an enforced helplessness that fosters neither institutions nor development but creates a culture where Africans might pray "for a disaster so that they would be noticed," or otherwise refuse to shift for themselves. It is a piecemeal conclusion arrived at in vignettes from Sudan south to Mozambique: "Only Africans were capable of making a difference." It is an inversion of the Western dilemma, where for decades foreigners have been brought in to do work that Americans and Europeans won't do; returning to Malawi after nearly forty years, Theroux asks, "Should outsiders go on doing jobs and taking risks that Africans refused?"

Theroux's authority to pose questions like this, and answer them in ways that will displease a large, politically connected and powerful movement, comes from a long history in Africa, even if spaced decades apart. Theroux is never a first-time traveler, it seems; he started in Africa in the early 1960s as a Peace Corps teacher in Malawi, and followed that with a lengthy teaching stint in Kampala, Uganda, at Makerere University, where among the faculty was the slightly older V.S. Naipaul, whom "Africa frightened...so badly he cursed it, wishing it ill until the curse became a dismissive mantra that ignorant readers could applaud: 'Africa has no future.'"

This is the difference between the two temperamentally rather similar men: Theroux was never prepared to believe Africa had no future, was at heart a fearful place; he understood instead "that the bush is benign." In those years he felt happy, found love, married, started a family, first started thinking of himself as a writer, a serious person. His confidence and security, the very opposite of what Naipaul took out of Africa, were born in that time and have never left him; *Dark Star Safari* is an often grim book, but it is never hopeless or dire. Even at the end of his trip, through all the corruption and horror Africa's dictators have visited on their lands and people, the beaten, oppressed Africans Theroux has met—has any wandering travel writer talked to more people who were tortured or jailed?—the deep scars of AIDS and famine, Theroux does not fear for the continent. Africa has "changed for the worse" in nearly all respects he can measure since his expatriate years in the 1960s, but Theroux is never unstirred by what he sees, a beautiful continent sometimes silent, sometimes in motion, wasting away and still reviving itself. Theroux's old university in Kampala is a wreck, but he is not distressed:

> The Makerere motto was *Pro futuro aedificamus*—We build for the future. What a nice idea! But it is a rarefied humanistic notion of the West, not an African tradition. Change and decay and renewal were the African cycle: a mud hut was built; it fell down; a new one replaced it.

Theroux hates the African cities he visits but sees a way of life in the rural hinterlands to be impressed with: poor and backward, maybe, but "simpler, happier." No doubt this is a fantasy that is nice for him but not for those who must actually live there, but Theroux later admits what most travelers would, if they are honest: that all travel is an act of imagination, where "one's mood is crucial." And so for him—which is not the same for you or me—Africa is indeed this "fantasy, an adventure in rejuvenation."

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This is not to say that Theroux suffers no disillusion or disappointment on his trip. He has big plans for Malawi, he tells us; it will be his sixtieth birthday:

> I had asked the U.S. embassies in Uganda and Kenya to send an e-mail to the embassy in Lilongwe, saying that I was available to speak at any school or college in the country or to meet aspiring African writers. I would also visit my old school, maybe bring some textbooks, and I would volunteer to spend a week teaching, to show my gratitude to Malawi after so many years: the long-lost son returning to give something back on his birthday.

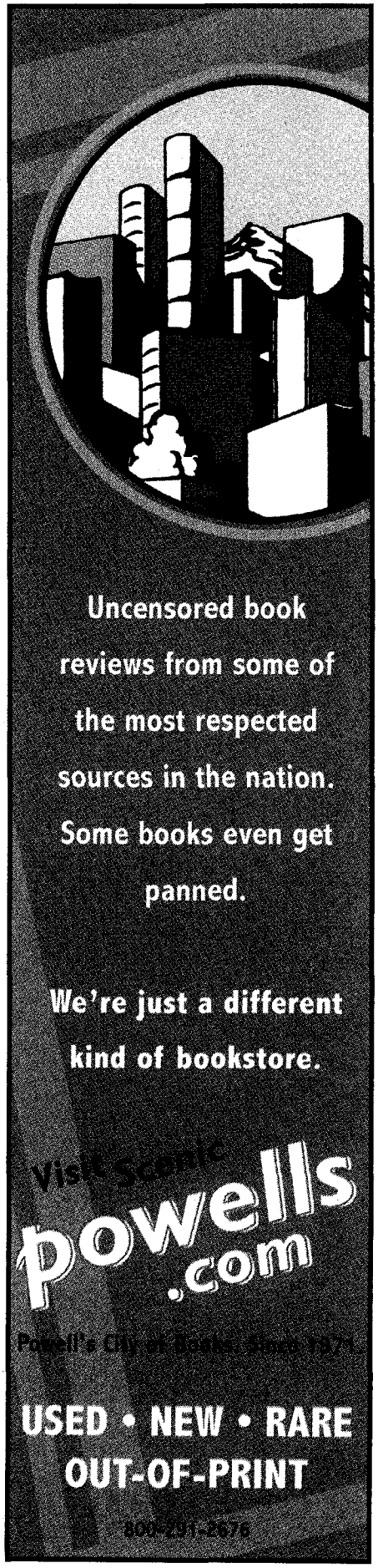
Naturally it is grandiose—a few books or talks, a handful of days teaching? Theroux himself now an agent of virtue?—and it is a disaster. The embassy has no interest in helping him (there is a marvelous comic sketch of an unkempt, slightly crazed Theroux badgering the diffident ambassador in his official quarters), the school itself is practically defunct, there is no volunteering to be done. A Scottish girl who clearly reminds him of his younger self escorts him around, notes the absence, in the library, of light bulbs or books, the latter mostly stolen by students. "I will never send another book to this country," Theroux avers. What if we left, he asks the young teacher, and hears himself in her answer:

> Then the people here would have to think for themselves. They'd have to decide what's best for them—what they want.... Maybe they would say they wanted education—and they'd have to do the teaching. They'd have to do what we're doing.... Or maybe they'd decide that they wouldn't want a change. They might allow things to stay as they are. Lots of the people in villages are fine. They're not miserable.

Toward the end of his stay in Malawi he dines at the home of an old friend, a leading citizen of the country, who after drinks becomes sentimental with his guest: a fatal mistake for which old friendship spares one not at all. He asks for Theroux's sons to come and teach, to "be a source of ideas and inspiration" in Malawi. For Theroux it is like Abraham being told to sacrifice Isaac. It turns out the man's nine children are mostly abroad, in the West. This is where they are needed, Theroux replies in a fury, not like his kids who can change nothing even as Africa changes them. Those nine privileged offspring "are the only people—the only possible people—who will ever make a difference here."At the same dinner another African—a former ambassador in Europe—has cheerfully told Theroux, "We are not cut out for this shopkeeping and bookkeeping and...number crunching"; this is what colonialism has done for Africans, the author implies, rendered them invalids.

So now, the visitor must know his limits, and on this score Theroux is quite careful: not meddlesome, not intervening, a well-wisher who understands his constraints. Such a stance paradoxically allows him a greater intimacy with Africa and Africans, unlike the agents of virtue, who "seemed to represent a new breed of priesthood, but...were the most circumspect, evasive, and unforthcoming people...either scolding or silent." All this is anecdotal and arguable, of course, but it makes sense: The traveler sheds his insulating material in ways the bureaucrat with a mission statement cannot. And with the insulation gone, the heat dissipates. There is something deeply sensual about Theroux moving anonymously through Africa, reading *Heart of Darkness* thirteen times, even if, as he says, he denies himself the comforts of whores who press themselves upon him at nearly all his stops. The writing project that comes to him in Egypt, staying with him his entire trip through the train to Cape Town when he recopies his manuscript by hand, is a long erotic story, as he calls it, a fantasy of a young man traveling with an older woman that presumably sublimates the overwhelming rush of emotion the continent has had on him. If we are to believe him, Theroux has no sex on this journey but has otherwise pressed himself very deep into the flesh of Africa, where, like Rimbaud in Ethiopia, "I is someone else."

Paul Theroux, who has described travel as "a vanishing act," only resurfaces in the act of writing, when he says he had hoped to disappear entirely. The ideal traveler, for him, would probably be someone like Patrick White's Voss (based on the German Ludwig Leichhardt, lost in Australia), disappearing into another continent, or Oates in Antarctica or Mallory up Everest. But no such luck, and in fact Theroux's death wish is rather tepid, as he would himself certainly admit. He just wants to be out of touch for a while, not bothered by the telephone or fax or e-mail or demands on his time. But still he courts danger, in the horrible buses and trucks and other conveyances he rides; even at the end, in Cape Town, when advised by a railway clerk, "Don't go to a squatter camp," he begins the next paragraph, "The next day I went to a squatter camp." But this is stub-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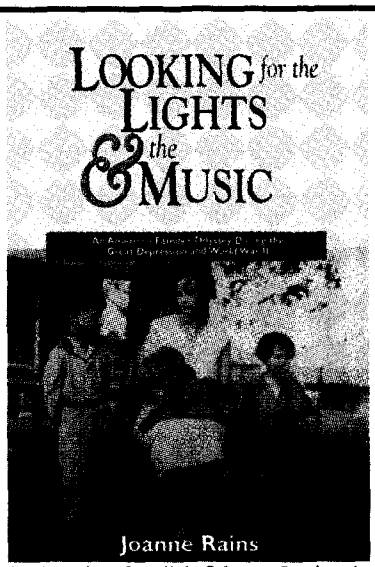
bornness more than foolhardiness or bravery. One remembers that the book is not the same gesture as the journey. In that *Granta* essay Theroux had written that "a travel book, I had discovered [while writing his first, *The Great Railway Bazaar*], was a deliberate act—like the act of travel itself. It took health and strength and confidence." But this can't quite be right, for the travel book is written knowing that one has survived, which one can't possibly say during the travel itself.

The travel book is invested, inevitably, with a survivor's gusto or bravado, even when tamped down by a deliberate effort, and it is what generally gives these books spirit and vitality. It is probably what makes Theroux's travel books all resemble each other, even though the individual contents are so various. The Africa book is not like the England walking book is not like the Western Hemisphere rail journey book. It is a different man each time, recovering from a different place. "You never come all the way back," Theroux remarks of this tendency in his final African days.

The traveler has changed. But he is not necessarily better or improved. The question of moral growth seldom comes into it. Travel writing is not scholarship, nor is it about getting one's facts right. There is no obligation to be fair, only to be true to your own experience, which, as Theroux mentions in *Granta*, means "the moments of desperation or fear or lust...the names of books read to kill time, the condition of toilets." The *Guardian*'s reviewer of *Dark Star Safari* has noted numerous historical and reporting errors by Theroux, yet still concedes his work is "free of many of the routine faults of travel books about Africa. There is none of the authorial self-mythologisation or romantic primitivism.... There's nothing dishonest in Theroux's account." I have never been to Africa, yet I wouldn't confuse Theroux's book with an education on this subject. When Evelyn Waugh wrote that he preferred all but the worst travel books to all but the best novels, he was making a fair comparison: The travel book is more like fiction, where we go to find the recognizable, if often unpleasant, truth about ourselves. Travel writing ups the ante; there is no novelist's weaselly way out: "It isn't me." One has to be prepared to be made unlikable in the eyes of readers, a risk few writers are willing to take.

In his books, Theroux is always meeting famous writers, easier when you're a famous writer yourself. In *The Old Patagonian Express* it was Borges in Buenos Aires; here, in Cairo, it is Mahfouz and, in Johannesburg, Nadine Gordimer, whose husband's funeral marks the close of *Dark Star Safari*. But by this time I was thinking of another literary figure: "He seemed at once preoccupied, knowledgeable, worldly, remote, detached, vain, skeptical, eccentric, self-sufficient, indestructible, egomaniacal, and hospitable to praise. He was like almost every other writer I had known in my life." This is Theroux on Paul Bowles, in *The Pillars of Hercules*. It is also, of course, himself. ■



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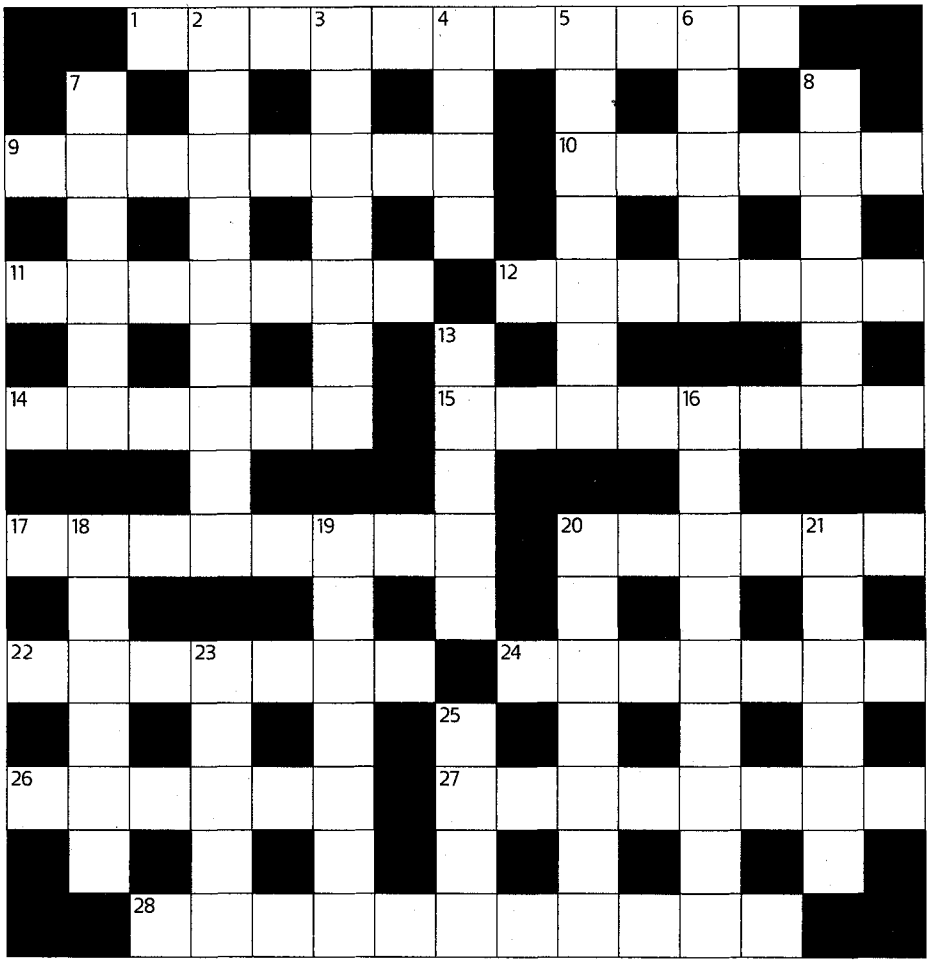

ACROSS

1 Evidently one doesn't charge for throwing things on the truck, but such a person doesn't pay for his meals. (11)

9 Most especially, this is omnipotent. (5,3)

10 Lots of bushes and things have a fairly large number of nodes. (6)

11 Look after a pickpocket, Mother, which shows you had the proper schooling. (7)

12 Mine here in Berlin proves more short and to the point. (7)

14 Associated with morals, and here in classic style, to a point. (6)

15 The last word in service can make this "going along." (8)

17 Sort of eager to write something about it, showing color. (3-5)

20 The name of Touchstone's "ill-favor'd thing." Yes, it's sort of rude at heart! (6)

22 Someone came in and went out, if you did this to him—and worked a little on the book with the German. (7)

24 Brings something forward as evidence, and notices the Italian leader inside. (7)

26 Act unfavorably toward a little work, with what the model takes. (6)

27 and **13** down What Caesar undoubtedly felt, thanks to Brutus! (8,5)

28 Set wrong to be repeated, as time supposedly does—which may be a nuisance. (6,5)

DOWN

2 and **23** down Where people go around together might be considered roods. (9,5)

3 At times, adding up the makings of a Dutch humanist. (7)

4 Such birds are sort of slow but considered pretty smart. (4)

5 and **20** down The last month has a crocodile associated with it, as well as autumn—but that's the way the Romans went! (7,3,4)

6 and **16** down Describing the hurly-burly of the washing so dried, and what it does in the dryer? (5,3,6)

7 Anatole of Paris considered one to be a player with an ill wind, getting a sort of boo on its performance. (6)

8 The attraction of a quiet ring? (6)

13 See 27 across

16 See 6

18 Tax this, and it means you don't owe anything to your Uncle. (6)

19 In the water, jump up, although the net is broken with it, which is rather obvious. (7)

20 See 5 down

21 How people go out on the stage. (6)

23 See 2 down

25 Makes up awful lies because a bit of land is isolated! (4)

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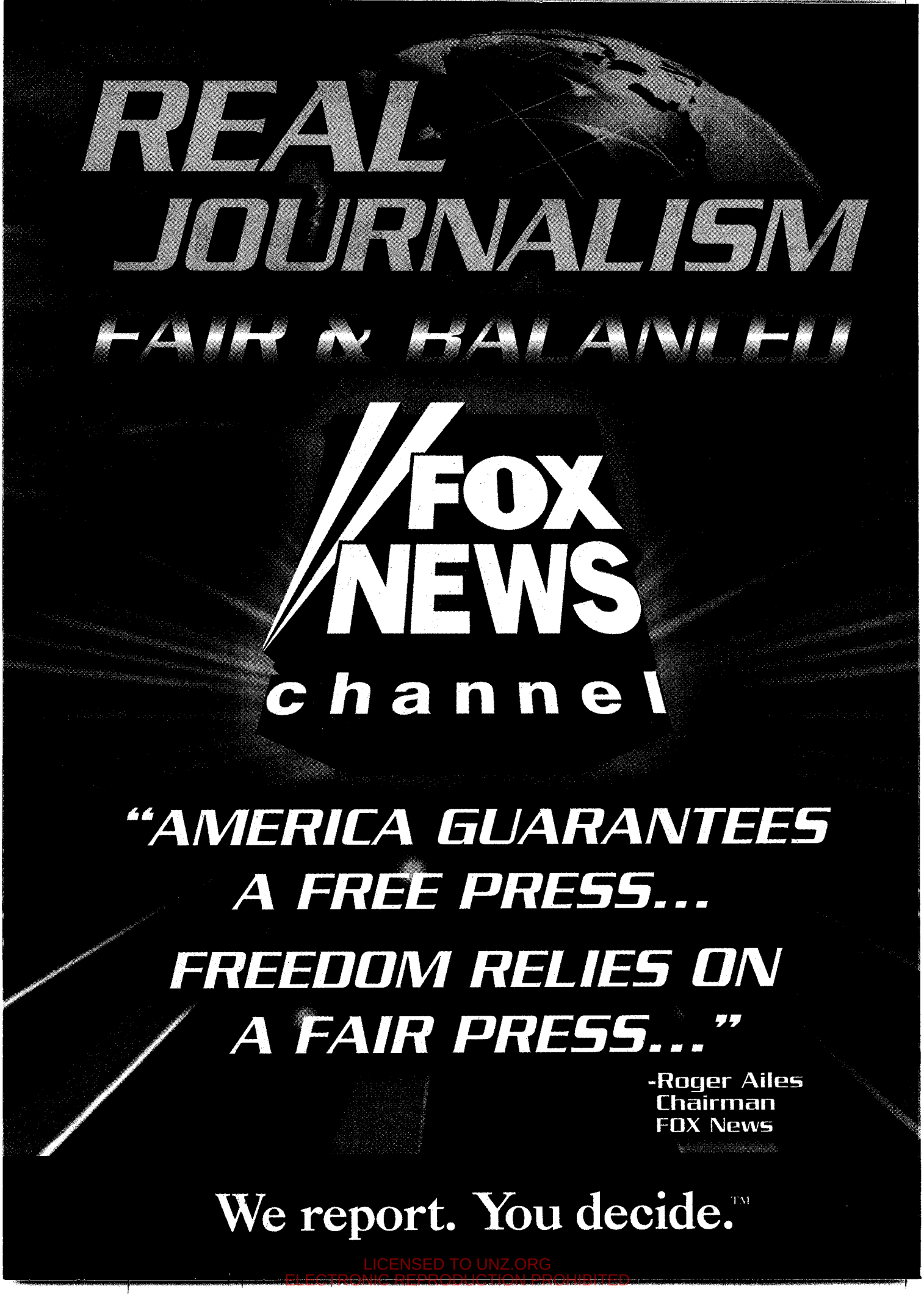

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